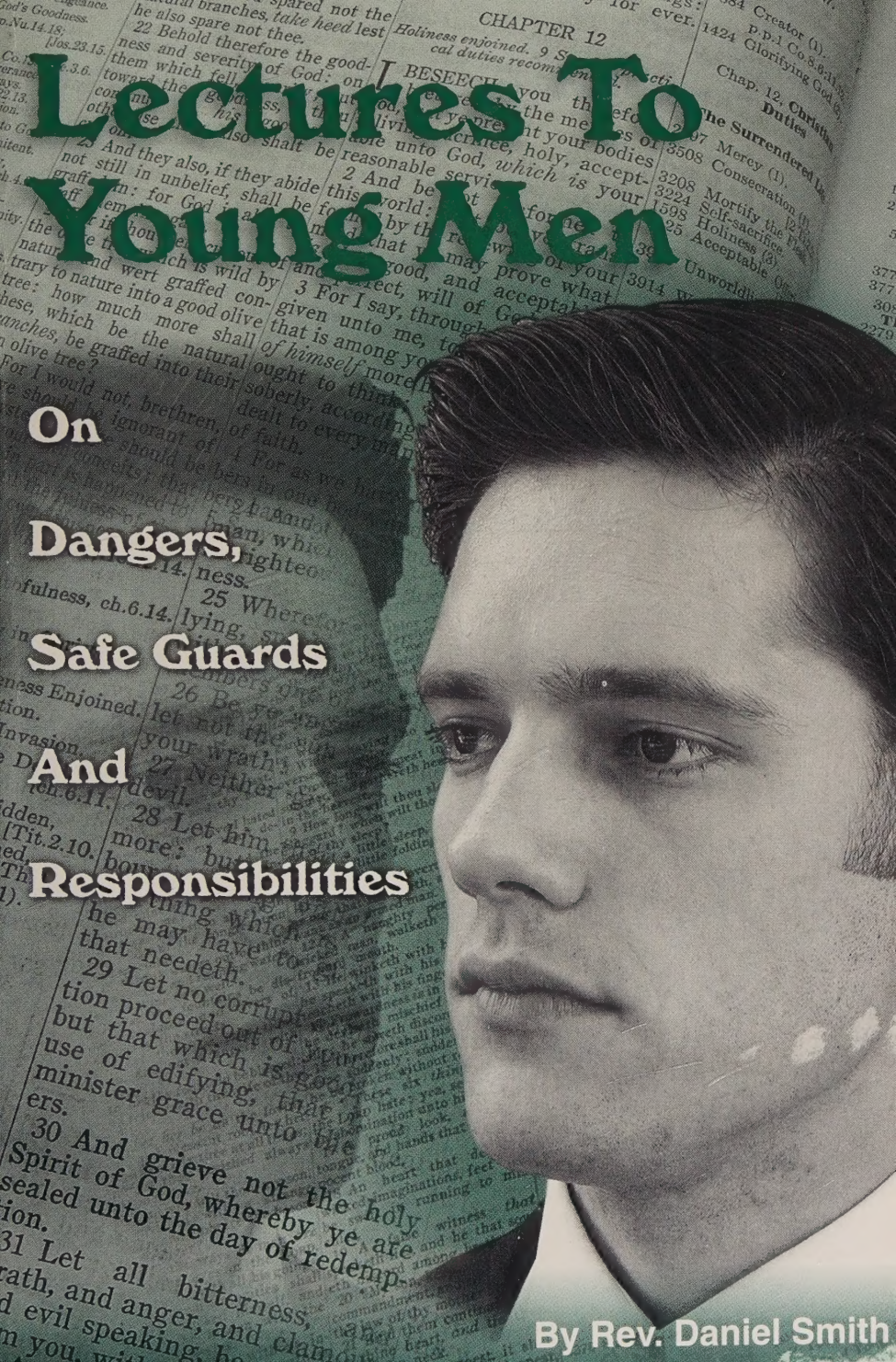
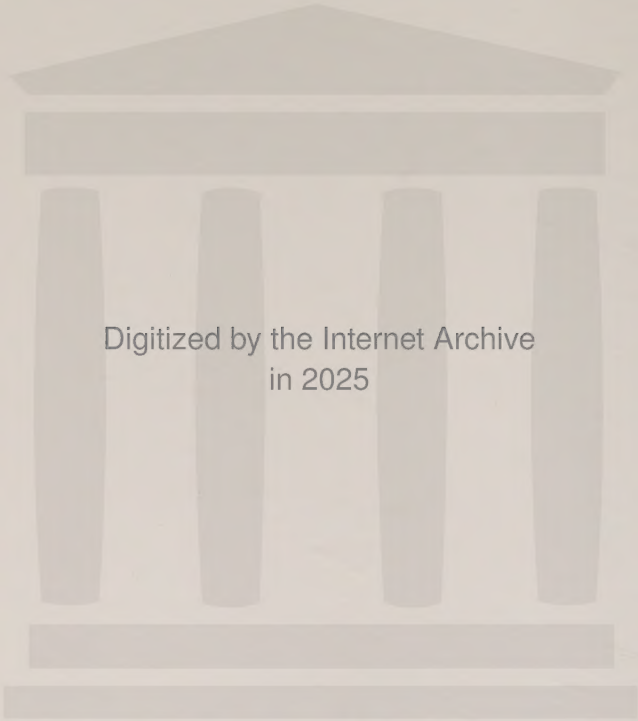
Lectures To Young Men

On Dangers, Safe Guards And Responsibilities



By Rev. Daniel Smith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Lectures to Young Men

ON

THEIR DANGERS, SAFEGUARDS,

AND

RESPONSIBILITIES.

BY REV. DANIEL SMITH.

I RESPECT A YOUNG MAN. -WESLEY.

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Preface.

"I honour a young man," said John Wesley, "because he may be doing good when I am in my grave." The author heartily adopts this sentiment, and he offers the following pages to young men as a token of that respect. The design has been entertained for several years, and the work partly executed; but a multiplicity of engagements has delayed its execution. It now appears, not as a rival of similar works, but as an auxiliary; its aim is not novelty, but utility -- the author has sought to make its language pointed, and its spirit and voice paternal.

Having long since observed that the *Bible* -- that infallible model for all moral teachers -- gives us "not merely the rule of

duty, but also the *exemplification*;" that it abounds with fact and incident, -- the histories of Abraham and Lot -- the adventures of Jacob and Joseph -- the parables of the prodigal son and the lost sheep; -- that, in short, "it presents us *actions* rather than words;" and having also noticed audiences listless under able speakers, when there was neither fact nor incident, parable nor allegory -- and still further, having seen the eyelids droop over books well written, but destitute of illustration; the author has come to the conclusion that "the primness of diction" which shuts out all incident and example, is as far from accordance with the dictates of philosophy, as it is from conformity to the precedents of the Bible. An address may challenge criticism as a finished piece, and yet may "run like oil over polished marble," and leave as little trace of its passage. Such an address is likely to do very little good, especially to the young. Diametrically opposite is the plan pursued

in the following pages: they abound in incident and example -- not attempting illustration where there is nothing to illustrate; but first giving the principle, and then endeavouring to rivet it by the illustration.

The author is not ignorant of the fact, that several works of this kind are already before the public, or that they have recently multiplied somewhat rapidly. This he regards as an omen for good. It shows that many minds are alive with solicitude for the welfare of our young men -- that their position and responsibilities are not forgotten. The more works of this kind, if they are of the right stamp, the better. Moreover, as every man has his circle of acquaintances and friends, so the author has his. Employed in the work of the ministry during the last twenty-one years, and having held the relation of pastor to several congregations both in city and village, there are many families with which his relations have been very intimate. Many have grown

up in the domestic circle and in the Sabbath-school, for whom he feels a special interest. He has also witnessed some scenes of sorrow, and heard some tales which have stirred his heart to its very depths, -- the saloon and the theatre; the company of the vicious, and the wiles of the strange woman; the infidel, and the abettor of loose sentiments, have lured the young man from his church and his Bible, and have corrupted his principles and hardened his hearts; or, enticed by the fascinations of the ball-room, he has begun to spend his leisure hours in those companies, and amid those scenes, "where thought is banished, where religion is forgotten, where God and eternity and death are kept out of sight, where conviction is stifled, where conscience is seared, where the heart is hardened, where the good resolutions made in a serious hour are broken, where the young and religiously-trained youth is gradually initiated into irreligion, and where the ruin

of millions of immortal souls has been sealed." Often has he seemed to hear a voice crying, -- "Speak, speak to that young man;" and too often, alas! has he found that admonition came *too late.* He therefore takes this opportunity of attempting to offer a word in season, to any who may be willing to listen, but especially to the young men of those families and congregations where he has been welcomed as a pastor.

Another reason for putting this volume to press, is; that a favourable channel for its more extended circulation presents itself. The press from which it issues is the oldest in the United States established for the great purpose of disseminating purely-religious books. It has a list of publications larger than any similar establishment; but among them all, it has none on the plan of this small volume. That the niche was vacant, the topics important, and such as require "line upon line," it is presumed will not be doubted. How effectively they are here

treated, is left for others to judge. The author desires the verdict to turn on one single question-- *Will the book do good?*

D.S.

Kingston, January, 1852

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LECTURE I.

DANGERS OF YOUNG MEN.

He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. -- Prov. 13:20

A splendid steamer, constructed at a cost of many thousand dollars, and prepared with every possible precaution for encountering the hurricanes of the Atlantic, not long since sailed out of the harbour of Liverpool. The weather was fine, the sea calm, and all were promising themselves a safe and speedy passage to their destined port; but scarcely had a few hours elapsed, ere the startling cry was heard, "Breakers ahead!" and with a shock which made every nerve vibrate, and froze every heart with terror, that noble steamer dashed on shore.

How came that superb vessel, with an experienced captain and a chosen crew, in

so perilous a condition? Was it, as some allege, because they had trusted an imperfect chart, on which the dangers were not pointed out with sufficient accuracy, and from which a light-house was missing? or was it, as others affirm, owing to a far less excusable cause? In either case, it will answer our purpose -- a purpose of simple illustration.

We, my young friends, are navigating a dangerous ocean. Careering winds, dangerous reefs, and deceitful currents beset us on every hand. We need a correct chart, and vigilance and skill on the part of each navigator. Happily for us, there is no error and no defect in our chart. Revelation has erected a light-house on every ledge, and lighted up her beacon-fires on every point of danger. I propose, on the present occasion, to call your attention to some of these dangers.

It is the more necessary to speak to you on this subject, because "the prevalent

vices in this nation peculiarly assail young men. The arrangements which are made to propagate iniquity peculiarly contemplate you. It would be instructive to go over the catalogue of vices that exist in this land, and to ascertain how many of the arrangements and temptations contemplate young men; and how few have any reference to any other class of the community. Atheists and profligates have little expectation of increasing their ranks from the aged, or comparatively from the female sex. Age has few passions to which profligacy can appeal; and the opinions of age are usually fixed, either for good or evil; and the proselytism of decrepitude and years are enlistments of little value. Let any man, therefore, look at the various arrangements which contemplate the extension of profligacy and sin, and he will find that they are *adapted designedly* to secure and ruin young men. Our taverns and dram-shops look mainly for patronage

to them. The numerous houses of licentiousness, in all our large cities, depend mainly on them. Our theatres and places of amusement look to them for patronage, -- and but for this patronage could not be sustained. The advocates for drinking intoxicating liquors look to them for countenance; and the army of drunkards is to be filled up, from one generation to another, by a vast conscription, as Napoleon filled up the armies of France, from the ranks of the young men. The attractions and allurements that meet the eye in the scenes of dissipation, are not designed for age, but for young men. The charms of music, the arrangements for revelry, the gorgeous scenery, the forms of dissipated though often fashionable life, contemplate them, and are calculated to lead them astray. There is not in this land a tavern, a dram-shop, a theatre, or a house of licentiousness, that would not soon be closed, were it not for the support which is

expected from young men. There would not be another opened and sustained, could the efforts of the good to lead young men in the way of virtue be crowned with success."

The text I have chosen may demand a brief explanation. It is very obvious that, in the book of Proverbs, the terms fool and foolish are used not in an intellectual, but in a moral sense. The fool is not the idiot, but the sinner; his folly is not that of the head, but that of the heart. The term refers not to the extent of one's abilities, but to the use he makes of them. A man with the most slender capacity may be wise -- wise for eternity; while "with the talents of an angel a man may be a fool."

Another word of explanation may be necessary. My text may appear, at first view, to allow less scope than I propose to take. It may seem to be simply an incentive to virtuous associations, and a warning merely against companionship with the

bad. But a moment's consideration will show, that "*to walk*" *with* either the "wise," or the "fool," implies not only frequenting their society, but *embracing their principles, adopting their language, engaging in their practices, forming the same habits, and journeying to the same goal.*

In speaking to you, my young friends, on the dangers to which you are exposed, I would not wish you to suppose that I regard myself as addressing those who are already gliding down the current of iniquity. Young men who regularly attend the house of God, are not in general those who have already unloosed from their moorings. There is all the more hope, therefore, that caution may prove salutary. Yet the hearer sometimes imagines that his character is mistaken; that when the speaker waxes warm and earnest in depicting the path of danger, he regards him as already posting forward in that path. Not so. The parent

who says to his son, "Touch not the intoxicating cup;" "Go not in the way of evil men;" "Be not ensnared by the wiles of her" whose "house inclineth unto death," is not supposed to *accuse*, but rather to *caution*; he aims at prevention; his language is that of affectionate warning. So I wish to be understood in these addresses. I come to you as your friend; and, with all possible familiarity and plainness of speech, shall discuss some topics which I deem of importance to your honour and happiness, both for this world and for that to come. I trust you will listen with affectionate confidence, and the interest which the subjects demand.

In pointing out some of the more prominent dangers of young men, I shall perhaps surprise you somewhat by my first topic. In this age of enterprise and daring, and especially in this country, where the forest has been felled, and cities and villages have risen up, as if by the sweep of

the magician's wand, where on all hands the signs of a busy and persevering activity are seen, you will perhaps say, "What need to caution young men to beware of IDLENESS?" And yet, when I see, as oft I do, groups of young persons, from the lad of fourteen to the young man of more than twenty years of age, gathered at mid-day about taverns and saloons, and other places of public resort; and, late at night, hear the noise of the billiard-table and the bowling-alley; when I see numbers of idle students, at public seminaries and colleges, who will neither study nor let others, if they can prevent it; when I see the number of parents -- the poor as well as the rich -- bringing up their sons to no useful employment; and, moreover, when I trace these idle young men a little farther, and find them the keepers of dram-shops and low taverns, of gambling saloons, and houses of infamy; or see them in the capacity of bar-room politicians -- the lowest class of office-

seekers, and the worst corrupters of the ballot-box -- when, in short, I see the vast numbers attempting to live by their wits, instead of the labour of the mind or the sweat of the brow, I am constrained to believe, that idleness is at this moment one of the sorest perils that beset a considerable portion of the young men of this nation.

We declaim against gambling and intemperance; but in how many instances is *idleness* the *root* of these vices! We declaim against dishonest bankruptcies and fraudulent insolvencies, against corrupt politicians and unprincipled office-seekers; but half these evils in the main originate in the want of some useful employment in the boy or youth. We see an army of sturdy beggars infesting our large towns and cities, "thrusting their hands deep into other men's pockets, and eating their bread in the sweat of others' brows instead of their own, thanking God for the poor-house, and contriving to get there, as soon as idleness

and improvidence will give them a passport." The *cause* lies back, with *the sauntering street boy* of fifteen.

Thus idleness is indeed "the mother of vice." How indeed could it be otherwise? Man was formed for action. There are powerful elements within, -- elements that must expend their energies in daily, useful occupation, or, like pent-up winds, they break forth in wild and desolating tornadoes. If we refuse to do good, the very laws of our being will force us into courses of vicious and destructive action. "Six days shalt thou labour," -- be usefully employed, body or mind, or both, -- is a law of *nature*, as much as it is a law of revelation. Its violators will be found conspirators against society, as they are against the law of God. No society -- social, political, or religious -- can be safe with an army of idlers in its midst. The family is not safe that embraces an unemployed member; he will bring some

blot upon its fame, or some sorrow to its bosom. To live without useful employment, is to live dishonestly. The food upon our tables, the garment which covers and adorns our persons, the house that shelters from the storms of winter, the couch on which we repose, the church in which we assemble, the administration of the law that protects our persons and property, the books we read, -- all cost the labour of some one's hands, or the toil of some one's intellect. What *right*, then, has he to live who will not work? What business has a man in this world, who neither by tilling the soil, the enterprises of commerce, or merchandise, or manufactures, the labours of professional life, the assiduities of the teacher, or some other occupation, contributes anything towards the common stock. "This we commanded you," says St. Paul, "that if any would not work, neither should he eat." Now this would be the sober dictate of

common sense, had the Bible never spoken. It is just as true now as it was two thousand years ago, that no person possessing a sound mind and healthy body, has a right to live in this world without labour.

Idleness is a fruitful source of beggary and wretchedness. Long since, the pencil of Solomon drew a most graphic delineation of the misery and want that follow in the train of idleness: --

"I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone-wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall they poverty come as one that travelleth; and they want as an armed man." Proverbs 24:30-34.

No man can be happy without employment. "If you wish to inflict the severest punishment upon a person, shut him up alone without employment. On the other hand, persons usefully employed are never miserable."

"I have lived," said Dr. Clarke, "to know the great secret of human happiness is this -- never suffer your energies to stagnate."

"When I visited a country neighbour of mine," says Lord Clarendon, "in the morning, I always found him in bed; and when I came in the afternoon he was asleep, and to most men besides myself access was denied. Once, walking with him, I doubted he was melancholy, and, by spending his time so much in bed, and so much alone, that there was something that troubled him; otherwise that it could not be that a man upon whom God had poured so many blessings should be so little contented as he appeared to be. To which he

answered, that he thought himself the most happy man alive in a wife, who was all the comfort he could have in this world; that he was at so much ease in his fortune, he did not wish it greater; but he said he would deal freely with me, and tell me, if he were melancholy -- which he suspected himself of -- what was the true cause of it; that he had somewhat *he knew not what to do with -- he knew not how to spend his time*; which was the reason he loved his bed so much, and slept at other times, which he said he found did him already no good in his health." Lord Clarendon adds, that the unhappy gentleman's melancholy daily increased with the agony of his thoughts, till he contracted diseases which carried him off at the age of thirty-six.

Indolence is an insuperable bar to piety.

"Among all those who, within my knowledge, have appeared to become sincerely penitent and reformed," says Dr.

Dwight, "I recollect only a single lazy man; and this man became industrious from the moment of his apparent, and I doubt not real conversion."

Let us bring these several considerations together; let us sum them up in a sentence, by saying to you, my young friends, that no man -- no youth even -- can hope either to escape the snares that beset him, to pursue a course of uprightness, or eat the bread of honesty, -- to be happy or useful in life, or comfortable in death, unless he have some useful and regular employment.

If Providence have placed him above the necessity of labouring for his daily bread, it has not placed him above the dangers that tread in the footsteps of indolence and sloth; or above the misery consequent upon the want of employment. Nor has it placed him above the obligation to do all the good in his power to his fellow-men.

"I am sure," said a lady to a good man, "you need not care for business."

"It is true," he replied; "but if I were to give over business, I should not be so able to assist the various societies that are formed for diffusing the knowledge of the gospel through the world."

Admirable reply! On his death-bed, this benevolent man exclaimed, "O how I pity the poor heathen, who have nothing to support their minds *in the prospect of eternity*."

And here I would add, my friends, that if any of you are poor, you have no great reason to regret it. Moderate poverty is a very great stimulus to activity, and the handmaid of virtue. Nothing is better for a young man of health and energy, than to throw him upon his own resources. Hoarded wealth is, in nine cases out of ten, a curse. It removes one of the most powerful stimulants to virtue, and

purchases a host of the most alluring temptations.

If any of you, on the other hand, are born to the prospect of wealth, gird yourselves to the conflict, and manfully contend against its dangers. At the same time consider the privilege it gives you of being greatly useful. Angels look down upon scarcely any sight upon earth more lovely, than upon a rich man acting as a faithful steward of his Lord. The man who lives only to do and get good -- who, while he *gets* all he can, and *saves* all he can, extracts the sting out of riches, by *giving* all he can -- can say with Job, --

"When the ear heard me, then it blessed me
And when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me:
Because I delivered the poor that cried,
And the fatherless, and him that had none to help him.
The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me;
And I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.

I put on righteousness, and it clothed me:
My judgment was as a robe and a diadem.
I was eyes to the blind,
And feet was I to the lame.
I was a father to the poor;
And the cause which I knew not I searched out.
And I brake the jaws of the wicked,
And plucked the spoil out of his teeth.
If I did despise the cause of my man-servant,
Or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me;
If I have withheld the poor from their desire;
Or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail;
Or have eaten my morsel myself alone,
And the fatherless hath not eaten thereof;
If I have seen any perish for want of clothing,
Or any poor without covering;
If his loins have not blessed me,

And if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep;
If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless,
When I saw my help in the gate:
Then let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade,
And mine arm be broken from the bone."

Another danger to which young men will find themselves exposed, is *dishonesty in the transaction of business*.

It is truly alarming to see the methods on which trade and business are conducted, by many business men. In manufactured articles, you frequently find bad material and poor workmanship. Groceries, and medicines, even, are extensively, and not unfrequently dangerously adulterated. Weight and measure are short. The defects of articles are concealed, and their excellencies extolled far above the truth. The *poor* and the *sick* are cheated out of their scanty and hard-earned pittance, by the quack and the charlatan. The buyer and the seller meet, too oft, as a couple of arrant knaves, intent on cheating each other. Not seldom the first thing the merchant teaches his young clerk, is the adroit use of "certain commodious falsehoods," -- "certain gainful evasions."

"A country gentleman placed his son with a merchant in ---------- street; and for a season all went on well. But, at length, the young man sold a dress to a lady, and as he was folding it up, he observed a flaw in the silk, and remarked: 'Madam, I deem it my duty to tell you there is a fracture in the silk.' This spoiled the bargain. But the merchant overheard the remark; and had he reflected a moment, he might have reasoned thus with himself: 'Now I am safe, while my affairs are committed to the care of an *honest* clerk.' But he was not pleased; so he wrote immediately to the father to come and take him home; for, said he, *'he will never make a merchant.*'

"The father, who had brought up his son with the strictest care, was not a little surprised and grieved, and hastened to the city, to ascertain wherein his son had been deficient. Said the anxious father: --

"And why will he not make a merchant?

"*Merchant.* Because he has no tact. Only a day or two since, he *voluntarily* told a lady who was buying silk, that the goods were damaged, -- and so I lost the bargain. Purchasers must look out for themselves. If they cannot discover flaws, it will be foolishness in me to tell them of their existence.

"*Father.* And is this all the fault?

"*Merchant.* Yes: he is very well in other respects.

"*Father.* Then I love my son better than ever; and I *thank you* for telling me of the matter. I would not have him another day in YOUR STORE for the world."

Again: you will be told by those who justify these "tricks of trade," that you will never be able to do business in any other way: but it is all false. There is no way half so likely to insure you ultimate success, as plain, straightforward honesty. A young man has finished his trade, and wants business. Suppose the first house he builds,

or the first manufactured article he turns off, he puts in bad material and poor workmanship, -- who will trust him next time? A merchant sets up a store in the village. I call and make a bill; but find he has designedly overreached me, and told me falsehoods. I will go there no more. My trade shall go over to his honest neighbour across the way. My tailor, or shoemaker, begin to play off upon me "the tricks of trade," -- I leave them, and seek the shops of honest men.

"Sir," said a watchmaker, "I served my apprenticeship with a man who did not fear God, and who consequently was not very scrupulous in the charges which he made to his customers. He used frequently to call me a fool, and tell me I should die in a workhouse, when, in his absence, I used to make such charges as appeared to me fair and honest. In course of time I set up in business for myself, and have been so successful as never to have wanted a

shilling, -- whilst my master, who used to reproach me for my honesty, became so reduced in circumstances as to apply to me for a couple of guineas, -- and did, at length, himself actually die in a workhouse."

There is still another danger, against which you should be on your guard. A *name* it scarcely has, but an able hand has traced its features.* "It is sometimes called PRUDENCE, but its nature is CUNNING. It is a thing of many aspects and many tongues; it can appear in any form, and speak any language. It is sometimes called MANAGEMENT! -- a vile compound of sagacity and deceit, of duplicity and meanness. It puts on the semblance of kindness and concern for your good; but its heart is treachery and selfishness. It meets every man on his blind side, and by

*Hawe's Lectures to Young Men.

stratagem makes a fool of him, to accomplish its own wily and selfish purposes. If he is weak, it deceives him by artifices; if he is vain, it puffs up his vanity by flattery; if he is avaricious, it allures him with the prospect of gain; if he is ambitious, it promises him promotion; if he is timid, it threatens him. Its leading maxim is, that the end sanctifies the means; and, in pursuing its end, it sticks at no means that promise success.

"Is it suggested that a principle like this must be of very limited influence, adopted by few, and those of the baser sort? I tell you, my friends, it is of very extensive influence. It is adopted, and acted upon, by multitudes who claim to be respectable and intelligent men. They may not indeed, in all cases, be aware that this is their ruling principle of action. They mistake its *nature*, by giving it a wrong *name*. They call it prudence, discretion, wisdom; but, in plain English, it is cunning, duplicity,

deception. Now this principle of double-dealing, of artful accommodation and management, is, if I mistake not, eminently characteristic of the age in which we live. It may be traced in all departments of business, and through all grades of society, down from the grand council of the nation to a petty town or parish meeting. Instead of acting in open daylight, pursuing the direct and straightforward path of rectitude, you see men extensively putting on false appearances, working in the dark, carrying their plans by stratagem and deceit. Nothing is open, nothing direct and honest; one thing is said, and another thing is meant. When you look for a man in one place, you find him in another. With flattering lips and a double heart do they speak. Their language and conduct do not spring from fixed principle and open-hearted sincerity.

"Against this principle and this cause every young man, who has any desire for

lasting respectability and influence, ought most carefully to be on his guard. Nothing can be more fatal to reputation and success in life, than to acquire the character of an *intriguer* or *manager*. It may succeed for a time, but will soon be found out, and when found out, it is universally despised.

"The straightforward course may occasionally subject us to some slight temporary inconvenience; but in the end it always turns out to our advantage. It is a great thing to have a character for *integrity* and *uprightness*, and such a character no intriguer can ever have."

One of the most forcible examples of this sort of character, was the late Colonel B. He was a descendant of a family in which was a rare combination of talent and piety. He commenced life at a most auspicious period, -- when a great crisis made heroes and patriots. Possessing abilities of high order, both for the forum and the camp, the prestige of family, and

manners the most fascinating, he might have ranked high among the great men of a stirring and memorable era; but he adopted the principles and chose the path of an *intriguer*, -- and what were the results? Entering the family of Washington, he soon lost the confidence of that great man. Possessing distinguished military talents, he never was intrusted with a single important post. Beginning to rise as a statesman, he was suddenly at the end of his career in that direction. Purposely involving himself in a duel, he became detested as a destroyer of one of his country's brightest ornaments. Plotting to place himself at the head of a new state, he was tried as a traitor, -- and escaped conviction, only by involving and ruining better men than himself. Acquiring immense sums of money, he nevertheless died in abject poverty -- hoary alike in age and crimes; and buried in an unhonoured grave, he has left to posterity one single

benefit - a *salutary lesson on the fate of an* UNPRINCIPLED INTRIGUER.

Another danger, and one to which young men are, from the strength of the social impulses at this period of life, peculiarly exposed, is found in IMPROPER ASSOCIATES.

Nothing is so contagious as vice. "Man," says Mr. Locke, "is a sort of chameleon, which takes a tincture from all surrounding objects." This is emphatically true of fallen, unrenewed man, surrounded as he is with evil. The bias of his nature is wrong. Hence Wisdom crieth: "Enter not into the path of the wicked, go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." Were we pure as angels, it would become us to avoid vicious associations. "Evil communications corrupt" even "good manners." Were the moral tone perfectly healthy and vigorous, care would be necessary to preserve it. Would a man,

because in perfect health, dream of impunity while swallowing a deadly poison? And shall we look for safety, while we open the eye, the ear, and each avenue of the soul, to the example, the insinuations, and the sentiments of the vicious and the profane? Sin is contagious. Would health the most perfect secure us in the pest-house? It is a spreading leprosy. Can we welcome it to our embrace, and yet hope to avoid the contagion? In vain does the blood dance joyously along in its appointed courses; in vain does the eye flash and the cheek bloom; in vain is the step elastic and the strength firm; the infection is inhaled by the breath, absorbed through the pores -- soon is it coursing its way through every artery and vein, and corrupting the whole mass -- the light fades from the eye, the limbs falter, "the whole head becomes sick, and the whole heart faint!" So is it with vicious associations. No safeguards of education, no strength of

purpose, no power of motive, no purity of virtue, will save him who "goes in the way of evil men;" for "a companion of fools will be destroyed."

But, alas! instead of our possessing the vigour of moral and spiritual health, temptation finds us already faint and feeble. Instead of an affinity for holiness, we have a decided bias to evil. Before grace renews, depraved passions urge us astray, untamed and headlong, rash and wayward, "as the wild ass's colt." Traitors are within, ready to betray the citadel to the assailants without. Depraved appetite, like a restive war-horse, champs the bit of conscience, and stands ready, at any unguarded moment, to leap the mound of reason, and plunge, regardless of consequences, into the field of strife and death. Such is unsanctified nature in its best estate. Is it then surprising, that even one wicked companion should often succeed in undoing

in a month, all that parents and teachers have been labouring for years to build up?

Nor should the fact -- a melancholy fact -- be forgotten, or unheeded, that the most vicious are not unfrequently found amongst the most insinuating. True it is -- and we rejoice in the reflection -- that talent, genius, eloquence, and learning, are often consecrated to God and the weal of humanity; but they are also frequently desecrated to the vilest purposes. And the adepts in the arts of corruption are rendered immensely more dangerous, by the popular tide that sets in their favour.

"There is a worse idolatry than the idolatry of mammon," said the justly celebrated Robert Hall. "I refer to the idolatry of intellect. See how our men of intellect are lauded, however flagitious their lives. This may yet prove the ruin of this great nation." Here is indeed a sore peril for the young men of this age. Genius should be estimated by the use to which it

is applied. It may be employed in a good or a bad cause. It is a sword, that may be wielded by a patriot or a pirate. Shall we admire the polish and temper of the instrument, without inquiring whether it is drawn in the cause of virtue or of vice? whether the man of talent is a Washington or a Catiline? Do the graceful folds and polished scales of the serpent render his bit less deadly? And who are they whom a mercenary press and infatuated millions are lauding to the skies? Not the men of heroic virtue, who perilled all on the altar of freedom. Not the Luthers and Melancthons, who toiled and suffered to burst the bonds of that gigantic despotism, which had crushed nations beneath its iron rule -- the men who faced dungeons, and instruments of torture, that man might once more breathe free, and possess a conscience. The Wiclifs and Jeromes, the Ridleys and Latimers, are too often neglected, while the Byrons, the Bulwers,

and Sues -- men whose touch is pollution and whose genius a serpent's fang -- are ranked with demi-gods; their names emblazoned on the scroll of fame, and their memories enshrined in song. But for the former, the chains of Papal Rome might now have been upon our necks; but for the latter, our literature had never been so debased by licentiousness, and every family where these licentious authors have found their way, would have been decidedly the better, if they had never been born.

Let our young people beware of this idolatry of genius, whether of the living or the dead. Let them not fall down and worship Lucifer for his intellect or his genius. Let them avoid -- as they value peace, purity, reputation, and their own souls -- the men who, with every advantage for being right, are of choice wrong; and who prostitute the noblest powers to the most ignoble ends.

Another danger to which you will find yourselves exposed, my young friends, results from what are called *popular amusements*. There are, doubtless, some recreations innocent in their nature, and even useful, under proper circumstances and restrictions. But if life is something more than a jest, and if we were sent into this world for something more important than barely to while away time in mere amusements, then we should make up our minds at the outset, that we have but little need of *mere* amusements, and but little time to devote to them. This common-sense view of the matter, may save us no little vexation and danger. The legitimate end of recreation, is the refreshing and invigorating of the powers for the more successful discharge of duty. The whole design, therefore, may be answered *merely by change of employment.* It is not necessary that this change should be from an employment which is useful to one

entirely useless. From one that requires intense application, you may change to one requiring but moderate effort. This will make even your hours of relaxation hours of usefulness.

Among the amusements which we are compelled to regard as pernicious, *the theatre* stands foremost. We are not ignorant of the pretences and wiles, the hypocrisy and effrontery, by which a thousand harpies, in the form of managers and actors, are preying upon the earnings, and corrupting the morals of the community. The theatre affects the appearance of decency, and conceals its most odious corruptions behind the curtain. It purchases a mercenary press, and employs all sorts of available decoys. By its advocates, it is impudently styled "*a school of taste and morals*." Yes; a school of *taste*! You know something of a refined taste, my young friends -- a taste that seeks and admires the *beautiful and the pure*.

Woods, waters, running streams, and cultivated fields, are its delight. The blue expanse by day, the starry heavens by night; the bow in the clouds, the dew-drop and the floweret; the *chaste* productions of the pencil, the chisel, and the pen; *truth* and *virtue* and whatever *combines* what is *chaste*, *pure*, and *beautiful*. These are the objects of taste. Here taste is matured, here she improves, here she is perfected.

But what sort of taste is that which delights in the reeking pollutions of the theatre? Is it from the indecent exposure of a lewd dancing girl, or the representations of *pride*, *ambition*, *revenge*, *seduction*, *adultery*, and *suicide*, so frequently exhibited on the stage, that we are to take lessons in taste?

A *school of morals*, too, is the stage! We shall then, of course, find the *teachers* in these admirable schools patterns of virtue, as well as models of taste -- persons of honesty, probity, and purity -- persons of

chaste manners and habits. These requisites certainly cannot be dispensed with in a school of morals. Ah, a school of morals indeed!

And how is it that the very persons who patronize the state -- I refer, of course, to the more respectable portion -- how is it that they would blush to admit the *teachers*, in this school of morals, to their tables? How is it, that when a young woman becomes an actress, she is regarded as lost to society? A school of morals! surrounded, almost without exception, with grog shops and gambling dens, drinking saloons and houses of infamy. A school of morals! universally reprobated by the virtuous, and thronged by the vicious -- the favourite haunt of vice, and the grave of principle and character.

"To send young people to the play-house to form their manners," says James, "is to expect they will learn truth from liars,

virtue from profligates, and modesty from harlots."

A favourite method of pleading for the stage, is, to contend that "*in itself*" it is not unlawful; and that the objections urged against it, lie only against its "abuses."* That is, -- the gross depravity of the plays and the players; the fact, that its frequenters are, in general, such of the wealthy as have neither occupation nor benevolence -- the most thoughtless part of the young, together with those young bloods, who want a little brisk folly as an interlude, ore, more properly, a stepping-stone, to their more vicious pursuits; loungers of all sorts; tradesmen who neglect their business; persons, who, in domestic relations, have no notion of cultivating the higher social and intellectual interests; and old debauchees, together with the wretched class of females, whose numbers, vices,

*See Foster's Miscellanies -- review of Plumptree.

and miseries, they can still be proud to augment; the pervading heathenism and profaneness, the detestable principles frequently inculcated, and the offensive grossness of the exhibitions; the enormous expenditures, -- sufficient to stud the land with hospitals and schools, -- all these are to be left out of the question; and we are to regard the theatre "in itself," or in the abstract. Now this, my friends, would be very much like discussing war "in itself," and aside from all cost, national enmity, battles, wounds, conflagrations, tears of bereaved widows, and miseries of helpless orphans. War without cost, or enmity, or blood, might, indeed, be a very innocent affair; but as we know of no such wars, we are very apt to judge of them as they are. And so also, as we know of no theatres, except such as are chiefly patronized by the idle and the vicious, and are the graves of morals and reputation, we shall be likely to

judge of them as they are, and ever have been.

The opinions of the wise and good have ever condemned this class of amusements. "The most virtuous pagans condemned the stage, as injurious to morals, and the interests of nations. Among these were Plato, Livy, Xenophon, Cicero, Solon, Cato, Seneca, and Tacitus, the most venerable men of antiquity. The brightest constellations of talent and virtue, which have ever appeared upon the hemisphere of philosophy, have all denounced the theatre, as a most abundant source of moral pollution; and assure us, that both Greece and Rome had their ruin accelerated by a fatal passion for these corrupting entertainments."

Sir Walter Scott says, "Unless in the case of strong attraction upon the stage, depraved women, and their admirers, usually form the principal part of the audiences."

Sir John Hawkins pronounces, "a play-house, and the regions about it, the *hot-bed of vice."*

Bishop Collier avows it as his solemn conviction, that "nothing had done more to corrupt the age [in which he lived] than stage-poets and the play-house."

Even the infidel Rousseau says, "*The theatre is in all cases a school of vice*."

The Congress of the United States, convened just after the declaration of independence -- a congress which for virtue and patriotism has never been excelled -- passed the following preamble and resolution: --

"*Whereas true religion and good morals are the only solid foundation of public liberty and happiness. Therefore*

Resolved, That it be, and hereby is earnestly recommended to the several States, to take the most effectual measures for the encouragement thereof; and for the *suppression of theatrical entertainments,*

horse-racing, gaming, and such other diversions as are productive of idleness, dissipation, and a general depravity of principles and manners."

Here are doubtless embodied the views of wise and goodmen generally.

Facts speak in language equally significant. Of *fifteen* young men from the country, who had been in the employment of a printer in New-York, *thirteen* were ruined by the theatre.

Young men, I appeal to you, shall such amusements receive your countenance? Will you venture where the gorgeousness of the scenery, the witchery of the music, and the allurements of prostituted talent, are put in array to filch your purse, corrupt your imagination, deprave your principles, inflame your passions, seduce you from the paths of virtue, and ruin you for both worlds? Have you once ventured within this dangerous enclosure? Abandon it at once and forever.

Or you are ignorant, so far as actual observation extends, of its dangers and its vices? Live and die in this ignorance.

"Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise."

LECTURE II.

DANGERS OF YOUNG MEN.

He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. -- Prov. 13:20.

In addressing you a second time, my young friends, on the dangers that beset your pathway, I would not be misunderstood; I would not have you imagine that I am using the language of censure. I come to you as a friend. My remarks are intended to be cautionary; my design is prevention; and I speak with all the freedom a pastor is accustomed to use in the Bible-class room, or a father in the midst of his own household. If I see danger lurking, where you little suspect it -- where popular opinion, and even many respectable persons see only innocent amusement -- I shall freely point it out, and give you reasons, which I hope will have some

weight with you. Resuming, then, the subject of *popular amusements*, I shall find myself compelled to condemn what many defend, and even eulogize. Little as some of you have been accustomed to look for danger, in that *promiscuous mingling of the sexes*, *in balls*, *cotillion parties*, and *dances of various names*, reflection and observation convince me, that the results of such amusements are never useful, and rarely fail to prove pernicious. The advocates of this class of amusements usually begin by telling us dancing is highly conducive to health, and almost indispensable to those who lead a sedentary life. I reply, that whatever *it might be*, we are to judge of it *as it is*, as *it has been*, and it is *likely it always will be*. Now whatever it might be, we may safely affirm that, as it is, it kills or injures two, where it cures or benefits one. Its advocates are very cautious not to tell us *of the late hours*, *the heated rooms*, *the thin dresses*, *the*

excessive fatigue, the excitement preceding and the langour succeeding, the coughs and pulmonary complaints, superinduced by passing out of heated rooms into the damp or frosty atmosphere of a winter's night. We hear from them nothing of the incredible number of deaths following a winter of fashionable dissipation.

It is alleged that dancing is almost or quite essential, to impart ease or grace to the carriage, to give elasticity to the step, and teach what some are pleased to term "the poetry of motion." Now the idea that dancing should be essential to the formation of a genteel carriage, appears to me very much like positive nonsense. As though a young person could not learn to enter or leave a room, to walk gracefully across the floor, or to make a polite bow, without first passing under the hands of that most contemptible of all bipeds, the dancing-master. Have the boys no fathers, or the girls no mothers -- have they no

powers of observation or imitation -- and is a dancing-master the only person capable of teaching politeness?

True gentility is not a thing to be played off in measured steps, and whispered out in affected tones. It is the out-speaking of a benevolent heart, and the out-beaming of a gentle soul through a mild eye. The true way to refine the manners is to refine the feelings. How refining to gentlemanly feeling or maidenly delicacy *must be the lascivious* whirlings of the waltz! No, my young friends; you must not mistake a mincing step, or a simpering smile, or a fine bow, for refinement. "It is not in the dancing-master's evolutions, or the sounds of fiddle-strings, that you can find it. Wealth cannot buy it; it dwells not in jewelry and buckram. Power and place cannot bestow it. Lord Jeffreys, though seated on the highest tribunal in the realm, was a very vulgar man, and could pour forth torrents of brutal ribaldry; and a

vulgar man was Chancellor Thurlow, sporting oaths and obscenity at the table of the Prince of Wales. But there was no vulgarity about James Ferguson, though herding sheep; while his eye watched Arcturus and the Pleiades, and his wistful spirit wandered through immensity. Though seated at a stocking-loom, there was no want of refinement in the youth who penned the "Star of Bethlehem," -- the weaver-boy, Henry Kirke White, was not a vulgar lad." The school of fine feeling is the school of good manners. Gentleness is the parent of gentility. One hour in a refined and virtuous social circle, is worth more than all the dancing parties of a whole season.

But, again: look at the effects upon the *purse*. Can you even conjecture how many fathers, every winter, toil, day after day, behind the counter, or in the sales-room, or at the mechanic's bench -- pale, care-worn, exhausted in spirits -- to support

an idle son or extravagant daughter through a season of fashionable folly or dissipation? Or how many are the young men, who spend the wages of the summer in dancing through the winter? They toil hard to fee the dancing-master, the tavern-keeper, and the fiddler. And suppose the case to be otherwise -- suppose these young people are the sons and daughters of the wealthy, and can draw from an overflowing purse; would they not derive infinitely more pleasure, in allowing the amounts thus expended to go to the cause of benevolence, to the children of poverty and sickness, to the orphan or the widow? Would to God our fashionable young people -- and every class of our young people -- would be induced to go and see what some others see, and hear the tales of woe they hear, and enjoy the luxury of expending the fives, the tens, and the fifties, in god-like charity, which are now expended in folly and in dissipation.

General Lafayette, once, during the revolutionary war, attended a gay party at Richmond, Virginia. Shrewdly complimenting the ladies and the party, he said -- "but my soldiers want clothing." So we say to young men -- the poor want bread, and the world wants Bibles!

Once more: consider *the effect upon mental improvement.*

What proficiency, do you think, will be made in study, in the culture of the intellect, or in acquiring a profession, during a winter devoted to the dancing-school, or the ball-room! I need not stop to answer this question; to ask it is quite sufficient. And, again: How far is it from the ball-room to the *bar-room*? and what proportion of the young men who find their way to the one, keep entirely aloof from the other?

And yet again: consider the exhibitions often witnessed in these nocturnal assemblies. Are the dancing and

waltzing all modest? are they always decent? Would a young lady, introduced for the first time, or a discreet mother, see nothing in those lascivious whirlings to crimson the cheek of modesty? Can a young gentleman of sense and modesty see a *sister* engaged in the waltz, with, perhaps, he scarcely knows whom, without misgivings of heart? And are there no dashing rakes, who find their way even into the most select of those assemblies? and are there no parents who have occasion to regret the acquaintances and connexions formed there?

Finally: consider the effect produced upon the heart.

Candidly, my young friends, Is the ball-room the place to cultivate the moral feelings? Would any awakened sinner go there to exercise penitence? Can any sane person ask God's blessing on the dance? Would any one wish to receive his

summons from the dancing saloon to the judgment seat of Christ?

But perhaps you are ready to allow that there are decided and unanswerable objections to public dances; but are disposed to inquire – What objections are there to private dancing parties?

I reply – the same, or nearly the same, there are to private *card* parties. He who begins to play merely for amusement, is in danger not only of wasting an immense amount of invaluable time, but of playing for something beside amusement: he is in danger of becoming, in time, a gambler. The same there are to tippling. He who drinks a little now, may in time drink more. He who drinks at the side-board, may, in time, drink in the dram-shop, – and finally reel in the streets. So he who dances in private parties, may in time dance in public parties, and thus be imperceptibly led into a round of follies, where he will empty his purse, squander his time, neglect the culture

of his mind, and form habits of frivolity and dissipation not a little injurious to his conscience, his heart, and his eternal interests.

He who loves dancing, is not usually a lover of the Bible. He who loves dancing, rarely loves to pray. Like the theatre, the dance has its associations, – and they are the vain, the thoughtless, the worldly, and the prayerless.

As to a *dancing Christian*, the very idea is repulsive. Dancing and going to the Lord's table! Solemnly vowing, in baptism, "to renounce the pomps and vanities of the world," and then plunging headlong into those vanities – dissipating the mind, destroying a relish for closet devotions, scandalizing the Christian name, grieving the Church, and calling down, by a most ludicrous and contemptible apparatus "of amusements and sacraments, morning prayers and evening balls," upon our profession the contempt of the profane

– these are the sad inconsistencies and the melancholy consequences of being a professor of godliness and a devotee of sinful amusements. Allow me, in concluding this topic, my young friends, to present to you the views of one who was no cynic; who was the life and soul of the social circle; whose fund of good nature and innocent humour was unbounded; and whose learning, sound judgment, and extensive observation, entitle his opinions to high respect: –

"I long," says Dr. Adam Clarke, "resisted all solicitation to this employment; but at last allowed myself to be overcome. I grew passionately fond of it. And now I lost the spirit of subordination, did not love work, imbibed a spirit of idleness, – and, in short, drank in all the brain-sickening effluvia of pleasure. DANCING and company took the place of reading and study, and the authority of my parents was feared, but not respected, – and

few serious impressions could prevail in a mind imbued with frivolity. Yet I entered no disreputable assembly, and in no case kept any improper company. Nevertheless, dancing was to me a perverting influence, an unmixed moral evil. I consider it a branch of that worldly education which leads from heave to earth, from things spiritual to things sensual, and from God to Satan. Let them plead for it who will. I know it to be evil, and only evil. 'No man in his senses will dance,' said Cicero, a heathen. Shame, then, on those Christians who advocate a cause by which many sons have become profligate, and many daughters have been ruined."

Another of your dangers arises from *a corrupt and corrupting literature.*

It is the glory of the English language, not merely that "it has gathered wealth from many lands," that its resources are unbounded, its affluence and powers unsurpassed; but that almost everything

worth possessing, in science, literature, law, morals, and theology, is to be found in this noble repository of thought. No other language contains such a variety and abundance of all that can elevate and bless mankind. And is it not one of the remarkable and cheering "signs of the times," that this noble tongue is spreading with rapidity over the world? The Anglo-Saxon race, and the Anglo-Saxon language, seem destined by Providence to extend over at least a very large portion of the globe. And is not every good man indignant that this noble language should be made the vehicle of corruption? Is not a corrupt book in such a language an insult to every man who claims the English as his mother tongue? Alas! that a Gibbon, or a Hume, should have infused into history the venom of infidelity. Alas! that Voltaire and Volney should have found Englishmen to translate their scoffs and sophistries into our tongue. But there is a literature more

dangerous, perhaps, than any of these. There is a class of writers who have arrayed licentiousness and depravity in the garb of decency; who have attired the harlot of impurity in all the elegancies of polished periods, flowing numbers, and poetical imagery. There is said to be a plant in the Indies, called by the French *velautier*, which exhales an odour, that at a distance is extremely agreeable, and invites a nearer approach; but when you draw near, you find it *insupportably loathsome* – fitting emblem of this class of writers. How fascinating the style of the voluptuous Moore! What witchery in the numbers of the licentious and misanthropic Byron! With what pernicious dexterity does Bulwer* use his polished pen, in the attempt to write libertinism into repute, and

*Of this writer, who is a fair representative of a *class* of modern writers of fiction, the Encyclopedia Americana says: "The moral tone of his works is low, and *their* general *tendency to make vice agreeable*."

make vice respectable! With what power of excitement of all the baser passions do the French works of fiction abound – thrilling, dazzling, horrifying! These, and kindred books, teem from the press in exhaustless numbers. They come up and cover the land like the frogs of Egypt. They beguile the young – those at least who are so unwise as to allow themselves to be beguiled – of their precious time; they inflame the passions, at that period when passion is most impatient of control, and when judgment is yet immature; they corrupt the imagination and pollute the heart. They rob the intellect of its manliness, and *dwarf* the thinking powers; they keep down the understanding to the level of childhood, and make intellectual pigmies of young persons, who should be rising to the mental stature of giants. They create a mental and moral dyspepsy, that cannot endure the solid aliment presented by science and the Bible. Indeed, if any

one thing more than another threatens to dwarf the sturdy Anglo-Saxon intellect, and prevent the race from fulfilling the high mission to which Providence has assigned it, in the world's elevation and renovation, it is this corrupting, enervating, trashy literature, with which our young people are universally assailed. My young friends, here you should be on your guard; here you should take your stand. You have no need to spend your time in reading what every corrupt writer shall please to offer you. So long as science spreads out her treasures before you, and unexceptionable writers in history, biography, and poetry abound, – and so long as the book of God – the book of eternity – is yours, you have no occasion to spend the fleeting hours of a short life in poring over the dreams of fiction. You have no need to resort to that school of poets whom Southey justly calls "The

Satanic School;* or to the equally Satanic writers of immoral prose. Can a mind, I ask, be pure, that delights in feasting on a tale of lust and blood? Does common sense, or common prudence, teach the propriety of *companionship in books* with characters, with whom we might not in social life even walk or eat, but at the expense of our reputation?

*John Angel says of Byron: "Infidelity and immorality are the lessons which all his pages teach, and nearly all his characters embody and enforce. Never was genius more closely allied with vice, than in the pages of this dangerous writer. His works are enough to corrupt the morals of a nation; and seem, indeed, to have been written for this very purpose. He seems to have been stirred up by the evil spirit, to attempt, by his fascinating powers, that mischief which the wit of Voltaire, the subtleties of Hume, and the ribaldries of Paine, had in vain attempted to achieve. If the young would not be cursed by the immorality and infidelity which lurk in his pages, let them beware how they touch his volumes, as they would avoid embracing a beautiful form infected with the plague."

"It is manifest," says Dr. Wayland, "that our moral feelings, like our taste, may be excited by the corruptions of our imaginations, scarcely less than by reality. These, therefore, may develop moral character. He who meditates with pleasure upon fictions of pollution and crime, whether originating with himself or others, renders it evident that nothing but opposing circumstances prevents him from being himself an actor in the crime he loves. Let imagination, then, be most carefully guarded if we wish to escape temptation, or make progress in virtue."

At one of our Sabbath schools, a gentleman from Concord, New-Hampshire, related the following incident, so strikingly confirmatory of the above remarks.

Being called upon to address the school, he stated that he was connected with the New-Hampshire State Prison, and that he would relate a short sketch of the history of a lad who was confined in that

prison. This lad was the only son of a widowed mother, and upon him she depended for a part of her support. She had purchased a small house, and had paid a part of the purchase-money, – and she was anxiously looking forward for the time when, by her own industry and that of her son, she would make the balance of the payment. He was a very smart, active boy, and was employed in a cotton-factory at New-Market, New-Hampshire. In an evil hour, he thought he would purchase one of those yellow-covered pamphlets, with which our cities and large towns abound. He did so, and the reading of it proved his ruin. It purported to be the history of a famous robber, who had made himself rich by his daring exploits, and was then in the enjoyment of immense wealth. The lad conceived the idea of becoming a rich man immediately, – and formed a plan to rob the post-office at Great Falls, New-Hampshire. He put his plan into execution, was

detected in the act, and is now in the State Prison, at Concord, paying the penalty of the crime which he has committed. On being interrogated, after his arrival at the prison, as to what brought him there, he answered – "The reading of that novel. O that I had never seen that book, if I never had, I should now have been at home enjoying my liberty, and have been a blessing to my mother."

Are we then, it may be asked, to condemn all works of fiction? Certainly we need not condemn anything, the tendency of which is good. And that such is the tendency of some works of fiction, may be readily allowed. But considering the small proportion which such works bear to the great mass; considering the difficulty of selection; the little to be gained from even the better class; the danger there is, that if we once fairly enter the field of fiction, we shall not stop with the select few, but be enticed on to peruse the

heterogeneous and pernicious many; and considering truth is always better than fiction, why enter this dangerous path at all? Why ever spend our time in reading a poor, not to say a bad book, when we may, at the same time, be reading one of the highest order? Permit me, my young friends, to close this topic, by presenting you with another practical illustration, of a portion at least, of the foregoing remarks: –

"I believe I was about fifteen," says the writer of this personal narrative; "the precise time has vanished from my memory, but never can the circumstances of that day be forgotten. It was a pleasant Sabbath morning, and I went to the house of prayer with my friends, with no unusual interest in religious things. But something in the prayer fixed my attention, and prepared me to listen to the sermon. My interest deepened. I began to feel, as I had rarely felt before, that the truths spoken had a solemn bearing upon my own destiny.

The voice of God spoke in my soul of wasted hours and talents, and of the coming eternity with all its tremendous realities. It was not the earthquake, nor the fire, but the still small voice. I was neither terror-stricken nor overwhelmed; but it seemed to me as if an angel spoke, setting my sins before me, and inviting me to turn and live. For a moment the rebellious passions were stilled, the way of holiness seemed a blessed way, and my heart *almost* said, 'I will arise and go to my Father.'

"Never before had I so felt it my immediate duty to turn to God. Often, from my early childhood, had I had fearful forebodings of a coming judgment; but until this time, no voice had ever said to me, 'Now is the accepted time.' I knew that these feelings could be easily dissipated, but that by earnest prayer, and diligent study of God's word, they might be deepened and strengthened, – and I *almost* resolved that I would give no rest to my

spirit, until I found it in peace with God. *Almost*! alas! it was only an *almost*. What came between me and my God? Am I not giving the history of many, when I say it was the fascinations of a novel? I had been reading one the previous day, and had left it with an earnest desire to know the close. I had indulged myself in novel-reading until it had become a passion – until almost everything else was forgotten for its pleasures. And now, as the sermon closed, the thought of that story rose before me. Shall I read it? was the mental question. I knew that, if on my return home I turned to its pages, every religious impression would be obliterated; and during all the closing prayer, during all my walk home, the struggle was going on – and the novel conquered. The voice of the Spirit was silenced.

"Blessed be God, it was not forever. Five years after, – after months, I might almost say *years* of conflict and darkness –

darkness that might be felt, and which at times shut out every earthly enjoyment, and made me exclaim in the bitterness of my spirit, 'Would I had never been born,' – I found, I humbly hope, peace under the shadow of the cross. But these lost years – what would I not give, what sacrifice would I not make, could I redeem them? But they are gone, with their opportunities of doing and getting good – lost to me forever. It was in some sense a forming period of my character. How different should I now be – now much more could I now do for God and my fellow-beings – how much more might I now be conformed to the likeness of my Lord, had these years been passed under his training – employed in his service! I can never look back without a pang upon that Sabbath – upon that deliberate rejection of the offers of mercy.

"Is not this history substantially that of multitudes? Have not thousands sold their birthright for the pleasures of novel-

reading; are there not thousands more, who have entered the Church of Christ shorn of their best years and their noblest energies, through the same seductive influence?"

Pride and extravagance form a topic, on which I would say a few words to you.

It is a common remark of writers of history, that nations, like individuals, have their periods of youth, manhood, and decrepitude. That when young, their poverty enforces industry, that industry leads to wealth, and wealth brings luxury, effeminacy, and corruption. Our country, my young friends is on the high road of prosperity, and rapidly accumulating wealth: hence it is a period of danger to the young. Our young men get high notions. The great resources of our country, and the sudden accumulation of fortunes by a few, raise in the minds of others wild and extravagant expectations; and they commence spending their fortunes before they exist, except in an over-stimulated

imagination; and this again leads to the peril, and oft the sacrifice of principle. A single illustration, slightly varying the circumstances, will apply to scores of cases, especially in our large commercial towns.

A young man takes his place behind the counter. He has every necessary qualification for success – health, enterprise, shrewdness – only he must bide his time; he must establish his character, and be content to rise gradually: but he is surrounded with the sons of wealth and extravagance, who dress finely, live high, and frequent the various places of amusement. This young man has but a small salary – at most but a moderate one. Perhaps, also, he has a widowed mother, – a mother whose tenderest assiduities watched over him in infancy, taught him to lisp his evening prayer; and when his father breathed his last, devoted herself to him with an affection which none know but a

mother – a widowed mother. He has a sister too, – a sister looking to him as her guide, her protector, and her provider. Every dictate of honour and affection say to this young man – be prudent, economical, self-denying, self-sacrificing. Be the support of your mother's declining years, the guide and guardian of your affectionate sister. But pride says: "How can I endure to be looked upon as an inferior? to be looked down upon by my associates? How can I forego their pleasures, or endure their ridicule? This young man has reached a crisis, probably the turning point in his life, – the period on which hangs his destiny for this, not unlikely for both worlds. Mark the struggle that is going on in his breast – a conflict between pride and duty. "Shall I venture – dash on, dress extravagantly, visit the theatre, follow my companions to the opera, and on their expensive excursions? or shall I obey the dictates of my judgment

and my conscience – cheer the heart of my mother, and be the protector of my sister?"

Does he decide on the former course? Mark the results! Debts accumulate, troubles and perplexities ensue, creditors clamour – threaten at length. Appearances must be kept up – but there are no means; he is in danger of being disgraced, not merely among his dashing friends, but with his employers. What shall he do? He will borrow from the till of his employer, and pay it again – no one will know it. He takes a small sum for the present emergency; but a second emergency demands a second loan. Now his anguish begins - self-reproach, fear of detection, accumulating embarrassments – no way to extricate himself; tries to ease his aching heart by plunging deeper into scenes of dissipation; drinks, begins to gamble in a small way, on stolen or borrowed money; is suspected and dismissed, – or, perhaps, detected and sent to a cell, to reflect at his

leisure over ruined prospects, and a broken-hearted mother and sister.

Some time since, a minister in the city of New-York addressed his audience from the words of Solomon: "Enter not into the path of the wicked, go not in the way of evil men, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." Soon after, he received an invitation to visit a young man in prison. He saw there a Bible; a leaf was turned down: he opened at the place, and saw his text. "I was present," said the young man, "and heard you preach from that text."

The picture drawn above, my young friends, might require varying a little in its lights and shades, – and then it might apply to half the gamblers, dishonest bankrupts, swindlers, keepers of dram-shops, and gaming-saloons, and corrupters of society in the land. Pride, extravagance, idleness and bad company have ruined them; and now they become, by profession, *corrupters of others*.

The danger of extravagant expenditures, and especially of "the first wrong step," though in this case calling for quite as much commiseration as censure, is painfully illustrated in the following incident. It is taken from a Boston daily paper: –

"We have just learned the particulars of a most heart-rending affair, and we now publish them, not for the purpose of gratifying an idle curiosity, so much as to hold out to the youth of our community a warning against vicious indulgences, by showing to them how easily such indulgences lead the most generous natures to dishonourable shifts, and how sometimes even the first faint departure from rectitude is followed by a terrible retribution.

"A youth of nineteen years came from a distant town to this city, some three months since, in search of mercantile employment. Well educated, of an

ingenuous temper, possessing a handsome person and fascinating manners, he soon formed numerous acquaintances and associations, that led him first into a round of pleasures, and then, it is feared, into a course of vicious indulgences. His hopes of obtaining employment were not realized; but he lived on carelessly for a while, thinking little of to-morrow, until he was one day awakened from his dream of pleasure, by the fact coming home to him that he was entirely destitute of funds, and had, moreover, a month's board-bill lying before him, which he was earnestly requested to liquidate on the morrow. In this dilemma, he did what so many others have done before him, and what we fear so many others, in spite of this warning, will do in time to come. He had in his pocket a valuable opera-glass, which he had borrowed from an acquaintance, – and this, without a moment's thought on the crime, or its consequences, he immediately sold

for just money enough to settle his landlord's demand.

"The deed had scarcely been done, when the owner called for his glass. Covered with confusion and shame, the unhappy youth had still manliness enough to confess frankly what he had done, adding a solemn pledge that, if the owner would wait but a few days, until he could communicate with his friends, he would make him good again, and give, in addition, any remuneration he should ask. This appeal was in vain – his friend was inexorable; and, hurrying to the police office, he immediately preferred a complaint against him for a theft.

"Soon afterwards, the unhappy youth was dragged to the police court, where, without a friend to counsel or plead for him, and almost sinking under the mortification of exposure, he was summarily examined on the charge, held over for trial at the municipal court, and

then thrust into jail to wait the issue. At the prison, he was put into a cell with another youth, also charged with theft. The door had scarcely been shut upon him, when the unhappy culprit threw himself upon the floor of the room, and, covering his face with his hands, called upon his fellow-prisoner to rid him of life. "Cut my throat – shoot me!" he exclaimed, in the wildest tones; "trample me to death! My parents! how can I ever look them in the face again!" Again and again he besought his room-mate to kill him, at the same time beating his head against the stone floor with such violence, that the former at last seized him, and held him by main force, while with loud outcries he alarmed the officers of the prison. The turnkey soon came, and, after vainly endeavouring to soothe the excited youth, he determined on calling in medical aid. Dr. H. G. Clark, the city physician, was accordingly summoned, and soon was in attendance on the prisoner. Dr.

C., after a careful examination of his patient, pronounced him in a very high state of fever, – and stated further, that he would not live a great while longer in such a place, and under such excitement. He, however, did all that could be done to alleviate his immediate sufferings, and then brought his case to the knowledge of Mr. Charles Spear. That gentleman, with the promptness he always shows on such occasions, repaired to the jail, and had him removed immediately to his own house. Doctor Clark still attended him; but he grew worse so rapidly, and his delirious paroxysms became so frequent and so violent, that additional medical aid was deemed advisable. Drs. Channing and Bigelow were accordingly called in, and consulted in the case, who, after several visitations, gave their opinion that the sufferer was in a dying state, and that nothing short of a miracle could save him.

"We should have mentioned before, that the young man at first resolutely refused to tell anyone the names or circumstances of his friends and relatives. It was only when the good Samaritan visited him in prison, and had won his confidence by kind and judicious words, which so easily reached the heart, that he disclosed the fact, that his father was an Episcopal minister, in the town of _____, in the interior of the State of _____. He also stated that he had wealthy relatives, among whom was a sister, who was married to a _____ merchant. When, therefore, the physicians gave their opinions as to the issue of the case, Mr. Spear felt it his duty to inform the father of the youth; and he accordingly sent on a message, detailing the circumstances, and telling him if he wished to see his boy alive again, to lose no time in hastening to his bed-side.

"In an interval of calmness, when consciousness and reason had returned for a time, the sufferer was informed of what had been done, and asked if it would not relieve his mental suffering to see his father once more.

"'O, no,' he replied; 'let me die rather, – I have brought dishonour upon his gray hairs, and how can I look upon his face again! Let me die; but have pity on my poor father.'

"These paroxysms of remorse and passionate cries, varied at intervals by delirious turns, lasted three days, – and all the while the sufferer was evidently sinking lower, and approaching nearer that grave he so wildly coveted.

"On Thursday evening of last week, the father arrived, and drove immediately to Mr. S. When the young sufferer was informed, as a matter of precaution, that his parent was already in the house, waiting below, and would soon be with him, he

covered his face, and uttered a piercing groan: –

"'I can't see him!' he exclaimed, turning to Mr. S., 'I can't – I can't!'

"At that moment the white-haired father entered; but let us draw a veil over what followed. No words can adequately describe that scene, – where the strong man bent in agony over the bed of his erring child, – and that child, burying his head in the pillow, shook with the throes of unutterable grief!

"On Saturday evening, the married sister of the young man arrived; and we further learn that his mother is also on the way – she having been unable to accompany her husband. It is thought, however, the latter will be too late, though the patient has already lingered longer than was expected.

"The doctors, as we have already stated, entertain no hope of his recovery, and it is feared that each convulsion will be

his last. But who that reads this tale does not hope that it may be otherwise! Who will not utter a prayer that this youth – so talented, so amiable as he is represented, the victim of a single error - may yet live to wipe out the stain upon his character; and to learn to look back upon these terrible scenes as but a providential ordeal, through which his soul passed, as through a furnace, and was purified!"

I cannot, perhaps, do better than close my topic by an illustration of quite an opposite character; one as pleasing as the preceding one is painful.

"I once knew a young man," says the Hon. H. Mann, "who, on removing from the country to the city, was introduced to a very respectable circle of persons, about his own age, who were in the habit of meeting periodically, for the nominal purpose, at least, of conversation and social improvement. But any looker-on at their symposia, might not have been

uncharitable, had he supposed that the supper, the wine, and cigars, constituted the principal attraction.

"He became one of their number, and for a time enjoyed the hilarity, and shared the expense of the entertainments; but, at last, rebuked by his conscience for this mode of spending his time and his money, he quietly withdrew from the club, though without abandoning his intimacy with its members. Through one of their number he learned the average cost of their suppers, – and taking an equal sum from his own scantily filled purse, he laid it aside as a fund for charity.

"At the end of a single season, he found himself possessed of one hundred dollars, wholly made up of these sums saved from genteel dissipation. This amount he took to a poor but most exemplary family, consisting of a widow and several small children, all of whom were struggling as if for life, and against a

series of adverse circumstances, to maintain a show of respectability, and to provide the means of attending the public school.

"The bestowment of this sum upon the disheartened mother and the fatherless children, together with the sympathy and counsel that accompanied it, seemed to put a new heart into the bosom of them all. It proved the turning-point in their fortunes. Some small debts were paid, the necessary school books, and a *few* articles of domestic clothing were obtained, the children sprung forward in their studies, equalling or outstripping all competitors; and, at the present time, they are all among the most respectable, exemplary, and useful citizens in the State. Now it would be to suppose myself not among *men*, but among *fiends*, were I to ask the question, as doubtful of the answer, which of these young men extracted the greatest amount of happiness from his hundred dollars! Nor can such

charity fail to benefit him who gives as much as him who takes."

GAMBLING is a topic which I had not intended to make a particular subject of remark. But further reflection induces me to offer in this connexion a few words of caution on this subject.

As to the *professional gambler*, little need be said of him. He is an outlaw. His occupation is a sort of piracy – but with this difference: the pirate boldly risks his life in his freebooting excursions; while the gambler, with his *loaded dice*, his *marked cards*, and all the treachery of his craft, does not even risk his money. The pirate boldly hoists the black flag, and proclaims himself the enemy and assassin of mankind; while the gambler steals forth in the darkness of night, and into concealed corners, and by all the arts of sly treachery, entraps, and then ruins his victim.

The extent to which the majority of professed gamblers become demoralized,

their utter heartlessness and cruelty, the manner in which they become steeped in vice of every description, the vast number of young men they ruin, and the extent to which they corrupt society, would be almost past belief, did not the most appalling facts put doubt out of the question. Could the veil be lifted from the card, the billiard, and the faro-tables; the lottery and policy offices, the mock auctions, and the race-course; could the actors and their atrocities, the victims, and their broken-hearted friends, and beggared families, all be brought before the eye in one vast amphitheatre, the sight would appal the stoutest heart – the beholder would shudder with horror! How vast would be the army of villains on the one hand, and of victims on the other! and what a train of weeping mothers, wives, and children, would gather around both parties! Of how many, with very slight variations of

the circumstances, would the two following sketches be the true history: –

"In 1833, an adventurer in lotteries committed suicide in the city of Boston, by drowning himself.

The fate of this unfortunate man contains one of those impressive moral lessons, which address us with a power which no uninspired lips can do. He was in the employment of one of the most respectable houses in the city, highly esteemed and respected by the members of it, and in the receipt of a liberal salary. About a year before, he had the misfortune to draw a prize in the lottery, – and from that moment his ruin was sealed. The regular earnings of honest industry were no longer enough for him; visions of splendid prizes were continually flitting before his eyes, and he plunged at once into the intoxicating excitement of lotteries. He soon became deeply involved, and his access to the funds of the firm held out to

him a temptation which he could not resist. He appropriated to himself considerable sums from time to time, continually deluded by the hope that a turn of the wheel would give him the means of replacing them; but that turn never came – fortune gave him but one smile, and that was a fatal one. He saw that detection would soon come, and that the punishment and shame of a felon would succeed to the consideration and respect he had always enjoyed, – and he had not courage to wait the moment of disclosure. He sought refuge in death; and added to his other sins the horrible act of self-murder! He left a memorandum which contained an account of the circumstances that made life intolerable to him."

"Though I never in my life lost or won five pounds at play," says a writer in the New Monthly Magazine, who had resided some time at Paris, "I was a frequent visitor at Frascati. I went as a

looker-on, – and, to confess the truth, for the purpose of indulging in the excitement occasioned by watching the various chances and changes of the game, and their effects upon those who were more seriously interested in them. Upon one occasion, I absolutely grew giddy from anxiety, while watching the countenance of an officer of the *Garde Royale*, who stood opposite me, and waiting the turn of a car, which was to decide whether he should at once return a beggar to his home, or his certain fate be deferred to a few hours or a few nights later. It appeared to be his last stake. The perspiration was falling from his brow, not in drops, but in a stream. He won; and a friend who accompanied him dragged him out of the room. Some nights afterwards I saw this person again. He was losing considerably, yet he endured his losses with apparent calmness. Once, when a large stake was swept from him, he just muttered between his teeth, whilst his lips were

curled with a bitter smile, "C'est bien; tres bien." After this, he silently watched the game through five or six deals, but did not play. I concluded he had lost all. Suddenly and fiercely he turned to the dealer, and in a tone of voice almost amounting to a scream, he exclaimed, "C'est mon sang que vous voulez – le voila." He at the same time drew from his pocket two notes of five hundred francs each, and, dashing them down on the table, he rushed into a corner of the room, hid his face, covered his ears with his hands, as if dreading to hear the announcement of the result of his speculation, and literally yelled aloud. It was awful! After a few seconds he returned to his place. His last stake was lost! He twice drew his handkerchief across his forehead, but he uttered not a word. Presently he asked for a glass of *eau-sucre*, and having swallowed it, he slowly walked away. The next morning his servant found him sitting in an arm-chair,

with his sword thrust to the very hilt, sticking in his throat!"

But it is against the incipient steps that I would caution you, dear youth; against all those games that *lead* towards this pernicious course. The card and the billiard-table are no places for you. They become exceedingly bewitching and exciting. They squander an immense amount of precious time. They often beguile the player away from his business and even rob him of his necessary sleep.

Not long since, a lady informed me, that when she was young, and but recently married, she was at a boarding-house with several others, gentlemen and ladies, similarly situated. To beguile the leisure hours, she proposed that they should play at cards. The company were, in general, in blissful ignorance of that species of amusement. She, however, taught them – they became excited, and continued their play far into the night. At length, the

gentlemen became so infatuated with the excitement, that, not unfrequently, the lady who first initiated them into the art, as she left her room in the morning, would meet them just leaving the card-table, at which they had spent the whole night. Unfitted, of course, they must have been for business, and for domestic enjoyment; and how easily might such persons be enticed farther – into a regular course of gambling! Indeed, we must regard that young man, who is fond of spending his leisure hours at the card-table, as *continually walking on the brink of a precipice*. Let his business go wrong, or his home from any cause become not altogether agreeable, – let him happen to fall in company with the adroit and polished gambler, – and he will be in no little danger of being lured on, till utter ruin ensue.

I shall conclude this discourse by referring to a single other topic – the danger ensuing from *over-anxiety for wealth*.

Selfishness, my young friends, has been characterized as the *epidemic* of our fallen natures. Nor are you ignorant that one of its most prevalent forms, is that of an all-absorbing desire to be rich. Especially is this the case in our own country. Here – a fine climate, a fertile soil, a coast indented with bays and harbours, a vast extent of navigable inland waters, millions of unoccupied acres of productive territory, a commerce, whose sails whiten every sea, and inexhaustible stores of the precious metals – all combine to open before the young and enterprising, prospects the most flattering and the most alluring. Avarice is stimulated to the highest pitch of excitement. "It will be well, indeed, if this does not become the ruling passion of the young men of this nation, – and if they do not regard all the precepts that inoculate morals, piety, and the love of country, as subordinate to the great purpose of this life. Never before, in

the prospect of the sudden acquisition of wealth, were there such temptations to dishonesty and fraud, as are presented in this nation; never so great danger that all the great barriers of virtue should be trampled down under the influence of one raging, master, almost uncontrollable, passion."

Yes; and it will be well if many young men from Christian families -- young men of talent and enterprise – who might strike for a high position in the Church of Christ, and a bright crown in the heaven of heavens – who indeed feel that "*the Holy Ghost inwardly moves them to forsake all and follow Christ*," – it will be well if "this raging master-passion" does not bear them away to wrangle in law, or scheme "upon 'change,'" or intrigue for lucrative office, or dance attendance for fat marriage portions – while "the whitened field" is without labourers, and millions are mournfully crying, "No man careth for our

souls!" We observe some painful developments of this character around us.

We blame not the Providence which has opened before us abundant resources. We have much cause for gratitude for them. But we have great need to remember that there are higher interests, – and to listen continually to that voice of kindness, which asks of us the solemn question: "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" While it is fully admitted, that to desire a competence is allowable, it is to be remembered, that – on every ground, religious and moral, or on the principle of a regard to our own happiness and the well-being of society - an eager worldliness, and insatiable avarice, is of all things the least to be desired – the most to be dreaded.

There is nothing that more effectually belittles a man, – that more entirely dries up every generous impulse. To see a being created in God's image, shrivelled up to the

paltry dimensions of dollars and cents, and employing his waking hours, expending the whole energies of an immortal soul, upon mere money getting; dreaming at night of nothing but gold; scheming in the house of God itself how to get gold; and clutching for it as death hurries him into eternity! O! this is indeed a sad spectacle; but by no means an overdrawn picture of many an unhappy worldling. Nor is this by any means the full-length portrait. What is it that impels so vehemently to over-reaching, to dishonest speculations, to fraud, to oppression, to swindling bankruptcies? Verily, "he that hasteth to be rich shall not be innocent!" verily, "they that *will be rich* fall into a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, that drown men in destruction and perdition."

Again: how many has an eager thirst for gain allured into those occupations which inflict the most terrific evils upon society! How many, my young friends,

that once possessed the common feelings of humanity, are now putting the intoxicating cup to their neighbour's lips, with as much coolness, and as little feeling, as ever an inquisitor gazed on the contortions of his writhing victim! How many, impelled by a lust for gold, are spreading broadcast over our land a poisoned literature, – a single volume of which is sufficient to ruin many souls! The appalling tragedy, which occurred in Richmond, Virginia, not long since, in which a man was shot in his bed by an enraged husband, is still fresh in the minds of the community. Major Pollard, the father of the misguided woman whose conduct led to that most melancholy result, stated under oath, that when Mr. Hoyt, the victim in that tragedy, said to him, "Your daughter is unhappy with her husband," – he replied, "Then it is her own fault; for I know Mr. Myres to be a kind, honourable, and affectionate husband." Mr. Hoyt rejoined, "Your daughter is a splendid

monument of grief." Major Pollard stated before the court, that if it was true, *he attributed it to reading such impure authors as Bulwer and Eugene Sue.*

Beware, then, my young friends, of the love of gain. Beware how you let a desire to be rich become the master-passion of your hearts. It is difficult to possess riches, when acquired in the most unexceptionable manner, and not set our hearts upon them. And the passion may exist in all its force, without the possession, or without our ever attaining the coveted hoard. He who knew what was in man – he who loved us even unto death – has said: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" Indeed, the most alarming warning he ever uttered was based upon the danger of riches. "A certain rich man," said he – not a certain extortioner – not a certain man who had robbed the widow and despoiled the orphan; but a certain rich man, who made

money and pleasure his god; who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day; that "certain rich man died, and was buried, – and in hell he lifted up his eyes being in torment." Who that reads these words from the lips of his God and Saviour, will wish to indulge the all-absorbing desire after riches, which is engulfing its thousands? Who that reads this, will not rather pray: "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?" And who that has riches, and believes his Bible, will not tremble and pray, lest he should be found an unfaithful steward, when he gives to the righteous Judge an account of his stewardship?

The foregoing remarks are not intended to convey the impression, that it is a sin to possess, or a sin to acquire, or a sin to pursue, an honourable calling with industry and perseverance. But it *is* a *sin* to

hoard; it *is* a *sin* to *desire* to *hoard*; it *is* a *sin to be without public spirit* and a *benevolent heart*; it is a sin to see the cause of benevolence and the cause of charity suffer, when it is in our power to aid them; it *is* a *sin* to give *sparingly*, when we have it in our power to give *liberally*; and *it is a sin* to give *grudgingly*, even when the sum bestowed is not fully proportioned to our means. These are right principles; and it is in the minds of the young that we seek to implant right principles, that, with honour to themselves, and success in carrying forward the great schemes of Christian enterprise, they may labour in their Master's vineyard when their predecessors shall be numbered with the dead.

LECTURE III.

DANGERS OF YOUNG MEN.

He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. - Prov. 13:20.

John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester – who has been well described as "a great wit, a great sinner, and a great penitent," – while lying in pain upon his sick bed, shortly after his conversion, displeased by the tardiness of a servant, uttered a profane expression; "but, O," he exclaimed, "that *language of fiends* which was so familiar to me, hangs yet about me. Sure none has more deserved to be damned than I have done."

Profane swearing could not be more appropriately described. It is indeed, "the language of fiends." To see a creature of God, contrived by his skill, formed by his power, redeemed by his mercy – a being fed at his table; clothed from his wardrobe;

whose every pulsation depends on his goodness; who has not a breath of air he can call his own – stand up before the heavens, and hear him curse his Maker, is as astonishing as it is appalling. And one may well be surprised, that the sun continues to shine upon such a one, or the rain to water his fields; that the lightnings of heaven do not scathe him, that his heart does not cease to beat, or his tongue become palsied, ere the blasphemy escapes from his lips. Would we, my young friends, get anything like an adequate idea of this stupendous wickedness, we must survey it on every side; we must quicken our sensibilities; we must shake off that stupidity and indifference, which familiarity with this sin has induced; we must consider that great and glorious Being contemned, and the creature who contemns him; we must call in the aid of contrast, and compare the reverence of heaven with the appalling profanity of earth; we must

consider profanity in its motives and results – its effects upon the swearer and upon society; we must endeavour to get something like the same impression of it that He has, against whom the enormity is committed.

To begin with the last: God has forbidden it – most solemnly and explicitly forbidden it – in his law; forbidden it, amid all the glory and terror, the August and ever-to-be-remembered scenes of Sinai; and he has explicitly assured us, "He will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

*Profane swearing is an immediate attack upon God himself.** He who is guilty of intentional profanity, pours contempt upon his Maker, stretches out his hand against the Almighty, defying his justice and his power. And this the swearer

*See Dwight's Theology, from which several of the following remarks are taken.

does – not under some peculiar temptation, not in some unguarded moment of passion merely, but deliberately and repeatedly. He brings God to view every day and hour, and every day and hour insults him. God – the great and terrible Being, in whose hand his breath is, by whom he is to be judged and sentenced in the great day – becomes an object of vulgar abuse and impudent derision!

Profanity is a sin for which there *is no motive*. In most other sins there is some advantage, hoped or expected. The dishonest man has gain in his eye; the thief may be hungry; the drunkard may plead the power of appetite, and the *elysium* of his cups; the liar may hope to derive some present advantage from his falsehood: but the swearer can plead no motive. His crime is the over-flowing of wickedness, from a heart filled with all malignity.

Profanity is in *opposition to every motive*. It never recommends us to any

one: it is allowed to be a mark of low life and ill breeding. It is confessed to be an insult to every person in the company in which the profane man vents his curses. We do not even suspect a profane man of being a gentleman.

It raises *suspicion* of our *principles* and character. You may have observed a striking illustration of this in some of our political campaigns. Those who were opposed to the late successful candidate for the presidential chair, were exceedingly anxious to fasten upon him the charge of gross profanity. Any why? Most assuredly because they knew that if they succeeded, it would degrade him in the estimation of the most reputable portion of the nation.

Profanity is a most *effectual means of corrupting our fellow-men*. It is eminently a sin that seeks society. It is not the sin of the wilderness or the closet. Where sin is entirely solitary, the sinner cannot be charged with the guilt of corrupting others;

but this is a sin that courts the light, and trebles its enormity by the injury it inflicts upon others. The tongue is obviously the prime instrument of human corruption; and among the evils it inflicts, the example of profane swearing is one of the greatest. It destroys reverence for God, and all things sacred. It corrupts the moral principles to a most alarming extent. In vain does he pretend reverence for *truth*, or *honour*, who has no reverence for his Maker. He is justly a suspected character. Profaneness naturally *shuts a man out from virtuous and genteel society*, and *leaves him to companionship with the vulgar and the vicious*.

How unspeakably awful does this sin appear, when we contrast the reverence of heaven with the profanity of earth.

When we look up to heaven, we behold the highest orders of created beings bending in lowly reverence before the great I AM. We hear cherub and seraph, angel

and archangel, crying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts!" We hear unnumbered millions crying, "Holy art thou, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!"

When we come back to earth, behold! God is insulted and contemned by ten thousand audacious tongues; a dense cloud of blasphemy goes up and darkens the heavens, and oaths and curses pollute the air we breathe.

Faint is this outline; but imperfectly does it convey the enormity of the swearer's sin; but I would fain hope even a brief sketch of this alarming evil may not be without its effects upon those to whom it is presented; and that you, my young friends, will never form a habit so destructive and pernicious; or if, unfortunately, any of you have already commenced a career so dangerous and which must lead to results so appalling, that you will at once retrace your steps.

But I should not leave this topic, without also warning you against everything *bordering upon irreverence.* Use not that *August Name* with anything approaching to levity; cultivate the most profound reverence for God, his providence, your Bible, the atonement, the work of the Spirit, and all things sacred.

Another danger against which you cannot be too earnestly cautioned, is, *the using and vending of intoxicating liquors.*

During the last thirty years, an immense amount of benevolent effort has been put forth, to save this nation from the terrific evils of intemperance. Nor has this effect been in vain. Intoxicating liquors have been banished from tens, nay, hundreds of thousands of families; thousands of young men have been trained up in total-abstinence principles, and are now efficient labourers in the temperance cause. Peace has been restored to a large number of families, into which the

destroyer had entered; many have abandoned the traffic, and a healthful public sentiment has been created. But the volcano still burns, and the fiery waves of alcohol still roll over the cities and villages of our country. Law still legalizes the demoralizing traffic; and the manufacturer and vendor ply their dreadful trade with an activity and success which might make an angel weep. Broken-hearted wives and mothers are shedding their unavailing tears, over husbands brutalized and sons ruined, for both worlds. In the windows of countless dram-shops the tempting beverage is displayed, to allure the unsuspecting youth; elegant saloons, fitted up in the most costly and attractive manner, raw crowds of young men within their fatal precincts; the steamboat has its bar; and the table of the ocean steamer sparkles with wines and brandies. Intemperance spreads her lures everywhere, and numbers her victims by hundred of thousands. Even at

weddings and social gatherings the wine-cup circulates; and the fair hands of the blushing maiden present the envenomed glass to the lips of her betrothed – a deed she is destined to rue, when she finds herself "that hapless thing, a drunkard's wife." With such facts before his eyes, he who attempts to warn the young of their dangers, would leave his work but half accomplished, should he pass on without raising a note of warning here. I shall proceed to call your attention to a few facts, concerning the nature and effects of intoxicating liquors, and the immorality of the traffic in them.

*Alcohol is a poison, and consequently destructive of health and life.**

Its first effect on the system, is a quickening of action – animation, excitement. This, by a fundamental law of

*"Permanent Temperance Documents," from which most of the following remarks are taken.

our nature, is a source of pleasure. This present pleasure men mistake for real good. It also arouses for a moment the reserved and dormant energies of the system, which are not needed, and were not designed for ordinary healthful action, but were intended to be kept for special emergencies, and which cannot be drawn out and used, on human life. This awakening of dormant energy, men mistake for an increase of real, permanent strength.

Yet as it gives present pleasure, and appears sometimes to increase strength, a motive is hereby created to drink it.

It sometimes also appears to remove trouble, – and this is another motive to take it. A man's wife, in the State of New-York, was seized with the cholera, and he was in trouble. She died, and he drank alcohol. Under its influence, he took her by the hair of her head, and in high glee dragged her body across the floor, and tumbled it into the coffin. It seemed to

remove trouble, – and, even under the most trying circumstances, to occasion mirth; but the mirth of the wicked is short, and the end of that mirth is heaviness. Yet, as the mirth is real, and is occasioned by alcohol, it presents a motive to drink it. And thousands do drink it on this account.

It sometimes also seems to remove even poverty; and to increase riches, and other desirable things.

A number of gentlemen in the State of New-York, assembled to consult upon the worth of certain parcels of land, which were to be offered at public sale. After due consideration, they concluded unanimously, that the lands were not worth over a certain sum, and that they would not sell for more. At the time appointed, they attended the sale. No one offered more than what was considered by men, when they were not poisoned, to be the worth of the property. The owner would not sell it at that price. He invited the men to his house, and gave

them alcohol and water, sweetened and prepared in such a manner as to be palatable. After partaking of it, they repaired again to the sale, – and one of those very men, who is now a highly respectable man, felt so much richer than he did before, the property appeared to be so much more valuable, and it appeared to him so much more important that he should have it, that he bid, and actually gave more than four times as much as he, or any other man, when not poisoned, thought the land to be worth, or was willing to give for it. The above account the writer of this had from the man himself. A vendue-master, in Connecticut, in giving an account of such cases, said, "I have often, in this way, gotten more than ten times the worth of the spirits which I furnished."

Let us now look a moment at some of the reasons why men who begin to drink alcohol, not only continue to drink it, but continue also to increase the quantity.

The system, by this poison, having been over-excited, becomes deranged; and having been over-worked, without any new strength being communicated, it is of course weakened, and therefore soon flags, becomes tired, and is exhausted. Now, according to another fundamental law, there is pain, languor, and inexpressible uneasiness spread through the system, as suffering nature, under the awful abuse which has been practised upon her, cries out for help. A man cannot thus chafe, irritate, and exhaust his system, and not afterwards feel uneasiness, any more than he can put his hand into the fire and not feel pain. He violates a law established by God; and must find the way of transgressors to be hard. Hence arise two motives to drink again. One is, to obtain the past pleasure, and the other is, to remove the present pain. But as the system is unstrung, and partly worn out, and is also lower down than it was before, the same quantity will not the

next time raise it up so high, nor cause the wearied organs to move so briskly. Of course it will not fully answer the purpose; will not give so much present pleasure, or produce so much effect as before.

There is another principle which tends also strongly to the same result. The more any man partakes of this unnatural, forbidden, and guilty pleasure which alcohol occasions, the less susceptible he becomes of the natural and innocent pleasures occasioned by the use of nourishing food and drink, by the view and contemplation of the works of creation and Providence by the exercise of the social affections, and the discharge of the various duties of life. It disinclines the mind to look at God, and incapacitates it, not only for the spiritual, but also for the natural pleasures, which his works and ways are adapted to afford. Hence a person under its power becomes more and more destitute of all enjoyment, except that of this mocker.

Let us now consider how it causes death. Alcohol is a substance which is in its nature unfit for the purposes of nutrition. It is not in the power of the animal economy to decompose it, and change it into blood, or flesh, or bones, or anything by which the human body is, or can be nourished, strengthened, and supported. When taken into the stomach, it is sucked up by absorbent vessels, and carried into the blood, and with that is circulated through the whole system, and, to a certain extent, is then thrown off again. But it is alcohol when taken, it is alcohol in the stomach, it is alcohol in the arteries, and veins, and heart, and lungs, and brain, and among all the nerves, and tissues, and fibres of whole body; and it is alcohol, when, after having pervaded and passed through the whole system, it is thrown off again. Give it even to a dog, and take the blood from his foot, and distil it, and you have alcohol, the same as the dog drank.

No, not that which he drank – for a dog knows too much to drink it; the same which – in opposition to his knowledge of good and evil, or the instinctive sense which God gave him, and drunkenness had not perverted – you forced upon him. Not even the sense of a dog will permit him to take it; nor can the powerful stomach of a dog digest it. Much less can that of a man. Take the blood from the arm, the foot, or the head, of the man who drinks it, and distil that blood, and you have alcohol. You may take it from the brain, strong enough, on the application of fire, in an instant to blaze. Not a blood-vessel however minute, not a thread of the smallest nerve in the whole animal machinery, escapes its influence. It enters the organs of a nursing mother, which prepare the delicate food for the sustenance and growth of her child. It is taken into the circulation, and passes through the system of the child; having through its whole

course produced, not only on the mother, but also on the child, the appropriate effects of the drunkard's poison. This is a reason why, after the mother has taken it, the babe, although before restless, sleeps all night like a drunkard; and a reason also, why such children, if they live, often have an appetite for spirit, and are so much more likely, than other children, to become drunkards. This is a reason, also, why, when the parents have been in the habit of freely taking it, their children are so much smaller and less healthy than other children; have less keenness and strength of eye-sight – firmness of nerve, or ability of body and mind to withstand the attacks of disease, and the vicissitudes of climates and seasons; and also a reason why they have less inclination and less talent for great bodily and mental achievements. By the operation of laws, which no man can repeal or withstand, the iniquities of the fathers

are thus naturally visited upon the children, from generation to generation.

Nor is the increased liability to drunkenness, or diminution of size and strength of body and mind, the only evil. There is also a greatly increased liability to insanity, and various other diseases. The records of insanity throughout the world, show that alcohol has been, in all countries where it has been used, one of the chief causes of this disease. It penetrates, pervades, and hardens the brain. The same may be said with regard to a great number and variety of other formidable and fatal diseases. From the fact that it is not suitable, as an article of diet, it follows of course that is must be hurtful, and that it is wicked to drink it, or to furnish it to be drunk by others. All the organs of the body, have as much labour to perform, as is consistent with permanently healthful action, when they have nothing to dispose of but suitable food and drink. God

designed that they should all in that case be diligent in business; and in the structure of the human body he has given them as much work as they can perform in the proper disposal of suitable diet, and yet remain permanently healthy, and preserve life to the longest time. And if you withhold from them a suitable portion of that which is nourishing, and thus lessen their strength, or load them with that which is not nourishing, and thus increase their labour, you necessarily produce premature decay and death.

In the taking of alcohol you do both of these. You ultimately lessen the nourishment, and you increase the labour of the system. Nor is this all; for, by this poison, you deteriorate the quality of the nourishment which the system does receive. Amidst the bustle, excitement, and irritation which alcohol occasions, the organs cannot furnish nourishment, pure and healthful, as they otherwise would.

And thus by a three-fold process you work out destruction.

Were the human body transparent, and the operations of its organs in sustaining life visible, every man might see that nature itself, or rather God, by the operations of his providence in sustaining life, teaches that the drinking of alcohol is wicked, and cannot be continued by a man without hastening his death.

The receptacle for food are the stomach and intestines. From these, after being changed, first into chyme, and then into chyle, it is taken up by absorbent vessels, and carried into the blood, and conveyed to the right side of the heart. From that it is sent to the lungs; and by coming in contact with the air, and taking out of it what it needs, in order, with what it has, to nourish the body, it is sent back again to the left side of the heart. From that it is sent in arteries, or tubes, which God has prepared for that purpose, to all parts of

the body, for the purpose of carrying the nourishment which it contains, and which each part needs, to its proper place. Along on the lines of these tubes, or canals, through which the blood with its treasure flows, God has provided a vast multitude of little organs, or waiters, whose office is, each one to take out of the blood, as it comes along, that kind and quantity of nourishment which it needs for its own support, and also for the support of that part of the body which is committed to its care. And although exceedingly minute and delicate, they are endowed by their Creator with the wonderful power of doing this, and also of abstaining from, or expelling and throwing back into the common mass what is unsuitable, or what they do not want, to be carried to some other place where it may be needed, or, if it is not needed anywhere, and is good for nothing, to be thrown out of the body as a nuisance. And, strange as it may seem, they are endowed with a power

of doing this, with a precision, and an accuracy, and a perpetuity also, which led God himself to say of them – "very good." And had they not been deranged by sin, they might, as a demonstration of the truth of his declaration, have operated, like the Author, in perfection, untired, forever.

For instance, the organs placed at the end of the fingers, when the blood comes there, take out of it what they need for their support, and also what is needed to make finger-nails; while they will cautiously abstain from, or repel, that which will only make hair, and let it go on to the head. And the organs on the head carefully take out that which they need for their support, and also that which will make hair, or, in common language, cause it to grow; while they will cautiously abstain from taking that which is good for nothing, except to make eye-balls, and let it go to the eyes, and will even help it on. And the organs about the eye will take that, and work it up

into eyes, or cause them to grow: And so throughout the whole. And there is, among all the millions and millions of these workers, day and night, all diligent in business, – or rather, had they not been invaded and assaulted by sin, or something like it, there would have been, – the most entire and everlasting harmony. And there is also the most delicate and wonderful sympathy. If one member suffer, all the members instinctively suffer with it; and if one member rejoices, all the members rejoice with it.

And when the blood has gotten out to the extremities, and been to all parts of the system, and left its treasures along on the way, as they were needed, – for freely it has received, and freely it gives, – then there is another set of tubes, or channels, which God has opened and prepared to take the blood, and with it what was not needed, or was good for nothing, or had been used till it was worn out, back to the right side of

the heart. From this it is sent again with its load to the lungs, for the purpose, by expiration, of throwing off what is not needed, and what, if retained, would only be a burden, and do mischief; and also, by inspiration, of taking in a new store, and setting out again on its journey round the system. And to give it good speed, the heart, like a steam-engine, worked, not by fires which men can kindle, but by the breath of the Almighty, keeps constantly moving, day and night, summer and winter, through storm and sunshine, sickness and health, till it has landed the immortal passenger, according to his conduct on the voyage, in an eternal heaven, or hell.

Then there is another set of organs, too minute and too numerous for any man to number, whose office is to take up refuse matter, and which if retained would be hurtful, and throw it without the body. What other organs reject, and thus show to be a nuisance, these organs seize upon, and

in the least possible time expel from the system. By doing this, they prevent sickness and death.

From the manner in which these various organs, guided, in a healthy state, by the instinctive power of their Author, treat any substances which are taken into the system, and also from the manner in which, as they do their office, these substances treat them, and through them the rest of the body, we may learn the nature of those substances, and also the will of God with regard to the use of them. This is the way in which nature, or, to speak more properly, God, by his providence, gives instruction, and makes known his will.

What then is the manner in which these various organs, guided by God, treat alcohol? First, with regard to those organs, whose business is to select and deposit, in proper places, a suitable kind and quantity of nourishment, for the growth and support of the system; how do they treat alcohol?

Do they take it up, and use it, for the purpose of making flesh, or bones, or anything by which the body is nourished, beautified, and supported? No; they all with one consent instinctively and instantly reject it. It goes to one class, and they reject it; to another, and they reject it; and then to another and another, and so on, but they all reject it, and will not, if they can prevent it, suffer it even to stop. No one will embrace it, or look at it as a friend; but all view it as an enemy, and treat its coming as a hostile invasion. Nor do they merely let it alone, they fight against it. This increases their labour, and they soon languish. Nor does this enemy let them alone, or merely fail to benefit them. It fights against them, and thus draws them off from their proper work, or goads them on unmercifully, till they become frantic. Having to labour amid the fire and the fumes of an irritating and poisonous enemy, the organs become themselves irritated and

chafed, their sensibilities are blunted, and they do their work badly. Then the parts of the system which are dependent on those organs, and suffer through their derangement, begin to complain of those organs, and they, provoked, retort back again. The harmony is destroyed; the kindness of the system annihilated, confusion ensues, and every evil work. In their frenzy they bite and devour one another, and are thus consumed one of another; while the common enemy is chased on from organ to organ, marking his course with irregularity of action, and disturbance of function, and if he cannot be expelled, will produce certain death. And how is it with the other kind of organs -- that mighty host, whose business is to watch for enemies, and drive them out; to clear off nuisances, and expel poison? How do they treat alcohol? Do they let it alone, and suffer it to remain? No; they would be traitors, should they do that; but

they are not traitors, nor cowards. They seize upon it, and as speedily and thoroughly as possible exclude it. And if another recruit comes along, they treat that in the same way, -- and another, and another. It is war of extermination, to continue if the enemy continues to invade, as long as life lasts. But mark, this is all so much extra labour; and labour, too, of a most disagreeable and exhausting kind, with a subtle and deadly foe, and in a peculiarly poisonous atmosphere, which that foe creates. And yet they had as much work as they could possibly do, consistently with permanently healthful action, to cope with only natural and common enemies. And when this artificial one comes, they are soon crippled and exhausted; they cease to operate; or they do their ordinary work badly. Their food becomes unwholesome, and they grow sickly. Their recruits fail, enemies multiply, and take strong-holds, and keep

possession; the territory is more and more invaded, till the whole is conquered, and death and destruction triumph over all. And this destruction is often accomplished, ten, twenty, and sometimes fifty years sooner than even sin or Satan, without alcohol, would accomplish it. And the poor soul is not permitted to stay out its probation on earth, by half a century.

Facts justify the conclusion, that alcohol has within the last thirty years, cut off, in the United States, more than thirty million years of human probation, and ushered more than a million of souls, uncalled -- and in violation of the command, "Thou shalt not kill" -- into the presence of their Maker.

The process by which this is done is simple, and certain. All the organs of the human body have as much work to do as is consistent with permanently healthful action, and with the longest continuance of human life, when men take nothing but

suitable food and drink. And if, in addition to this, you take alcohol, and thus throw upon them the additional labour of rejecting and throwing off the poison, and at the same time, as by the taking of it you certainly will, weaken and exhaust their energies, you necessarily shorten their duration, -- and commit suicide as really as if you did it with arsenic, a pistol, or a halter. It also greatly increases the violence of diseases which arise from other causes, and often produces death, in cases in which, had not alcohol been used, a cure might have been easily and speedily effected.

Nor is this all. There is another set of organs, whose office is to furnish sensibility to the human system. For this purpose they are spread over the surface of the whole body, and in such vast numbers and variety, that you cannot stick into the skin and point even of the finest needle, and not strike some of them, and thus

occasion pain. They seem to form the link between the body and the mind, and to be the medium through which each reciprocally and instantly acts upon the other. Of course whatever affects them, affects not only the body, but also the soul, and the influence which one has upon the other.

Their seat is the brain. From this they derive excitement, and power to communicate it to all parts of the system. And in order to furnish this excitement, the brain must itself be excited. And what it needs for this purpose, is that, and that only, which is furnished by arterial blood, when men take nothing but suitable food and drink, exercise, rest, and sleep. For this excitement it eagerly waits, and this it joyfully receives; and cheerfully, with the rapidity almost of lightning, communicates to every part, spreading a glow of animation, and making even existence, especially amidst the exuberance of divine

kindness, a source of constant and exquisite delight. But as it stands waiting to receive, and instantly and joyfully to communicate, the bread of the milk of Heaven, you throw in alcohol, and thus instead of bread give it serpents; instead of milk, scorpions; and they go hissing and darting their serpent, scorpion-like influence through the whole man -- body and soul; turning husbands into demons, and fathers into fiends; causing them, as it were, to be born of the devil and regenerated for damnation.

Did it destroy only the body, the evil would be comparatively nothing; but the seat of its mischief is the soul. It cuts off its probation. And this, if done wittingly, involves the soul in tremendous guilt. Nor does it merely shorten its probation. It enfeebles its powers, corrupts its character, and aggravates all its moral diseases. It also tends to counteract all the means of divine appointment for their removal, and thus to fix the soul in permanent, unending

death. Not that it tends to annihilate its existence; but it tends to annihilate its excellence; to annihilate its blessedness; to annihilate its hopes; to fix it in a state of unutterable and eternal anguish; to make endless existence an endless curse; and bring upon the soul, in the language of the Bible, "the second death."

No one that watches the progress of events, can fail to perceive, that young men are frequently placed under circumstances of strong temptation to engage in the traffic in these destructive liquors. Very likely some of those whom I now address, will find themselves in precisely these circumstances. The distillery, the store, the tavern, the saloon, the grocer, the bar of the steam-boat, the table of the boarding-house, the wholesale and retail establishments of every name, hold out their inducements to young men, to engage, under some form, in the work of "putting the cup to their neighbour's lips." But it is well first to

pause and count the costs. Let us then briefly consider: --

The morality of the traffic in intoxicating liquors.

The salvation of the community from this fell destroyer of intemperance, is evidently in the hands of sober men. Let them cease to sell the poison, cease to use it, and go, with love in their hearts and kindness on their tongues, to those who are now twice dead, and well-nigh buried, and it will cause them to live. Their life or death is in the hands of sober men. The idea that the kind bounties of Providence can be converted into the drunkard's poison, drunkard-making be carried on, and drunkenness perpetuated, by drunkards only, is absurd. It never has been, and it never will be done. They have not the intelligence, the pecuniary ability, the foresight, the method, the diligence, and persevering activity in wickedness, which the prosecution of such a vile business

requires. Should they attempt it, they would find themselves prostrated -- and should they continue it, it would kill them. It actually kills a great portion even of those, who, when they enter it, are sober; and it destroys more than twice as many, in proportion, of their children. What, then, could drunkards do with it alone? Should all the drunkards in the world combine to carry it on, it would only destroy them so much the quicker; and should no sober man touch it, they could have no successors, and the whole mischief would cease. But they will not attempt to prosecute it; it is a business too mean, and too degrading, even for drunkards to prosecute alone. Let all sober men abandon it, and most of the drunkards will abandon it, and those who will not, must soon die, and the last remnant of drunkenness will die with them. It is thus capable of perfect demonstration, that drunkenness can be perpetuated only by sober men. We would, therefore, put it

to the conscience of every sober man: Can you, without guilt -- enormous guilt -- aid in perpetuating that current, which is bearing on its bosom hundreds of thousands in the United States towards interminable woe, and which is enticing, in every generation, from the peaceful shores of sobriety and comfort, hundreds of thousands more, to be borne onward upon the same fiery stream towards the same eternal doom? No, you cannot do it, without tremendous guilt. And, if you continue to be knowingly accessory to the drunkard's woes; and you will expose your children to have your iniquities visited on them, from generation to generation.

A rum-seller, in Massachusetts, was visited by the wife of one of his customers, who besought him not to sell the poison to her husband; it made him so cruel to her and her children, that she could not endure it. But he let her know that if her husband wanted rum, he should have it. She went

away to mourn in silence, and to try to guard her children against the direful influence of him, who, for money, was killing their father. He continued to sell. His customers, from time to time, became drunkards. Their estates fell into his hands. He became a rich man. At length he died; and went as poor to judgment, as if he had gained nothing by destroying his neighbours. His sons inherited his estate. They moved into the Western country. The eldest opened a store, and prosecuted the business of his father. He soon, like his father's customers, became a drunkard, and sunk into an ignominious grave. His brother took his place, and prosecuted the business. He too became a drunkard, and was shortly with his brother, in the drunkard's grave. The third and only remaining son took the property, and prosecuted the business; and when our secretary, the last winter, passed that way, he was a drunkard, staggering about the

streets. And as the father witnesses his iniquities visited upon his children, and beholds them coming in such a rapid succession, to mingle with those whom his and their business has ruined, in the place prepared for them, does he not feel, that should the way of destroying others appear even right unto a man, the end thereof is the way of death? "It is found," says Judge Platt, "that of the tavern-keepers and retailers of ardent spirits in the State of New-York, during the last forty years, more than two-thirds have become drunkards, and reduced their families to poverty and wretchedness. Let us redouble our efforts, by kind entreaty and friendly admonition, to save them from their own worst enemies, *themselves*."* And can a business which destroys -- and there is reason to fear for

*In the State of Ohio, among from five to six hundred in the Penitentiary one hundred and forty-five had been rum-sellers.

both worlds -- so many of those who prosecute it, and often reduces their families to wretchedness, and makes drunkards of their children, be continued without tremendous guilt? And when we look at the multitudes of others who are ruined by it, and witness its tendency forever to ruin all who come under its influence, and to perpetuate its destructive effects to all future generations, the guilt of it rises to an overwhelming magnitude.

And this guilt with its odium, the public sentiment, under the guidance of truth, is fastening more and more where it belongs -- on the men who continue to prosecute the business which perpetuates the evil.

Says the author of Temperance Tales: "What is the drunkard's death? Is it a natural or an accidental death? It is obviously not a natural death. The drunkard dies; and upon a careful examination after death, the skilful

physician -- the highest authority on such a point in a court of law -- declares, without hesitation, that his death was occasioned by spirituous liquor. Can such a death be denominated accidental? The acts of the dram-seller who sells, and of the drunkard who drinks the alcohol, are voluntary acts and the proofs, clear and incontestable, that life is shortened and death produced by the use of it, are as universally known and appreciated, as that death is produced by arsenic. Here, then, are the will and the knowledge; the will to do the act, with a full knowledge of its probable effects. Such can neither be an accidental death, nor a natural death. Can it be possible, that when a drunkard dies of hard drinking, somebody is guilty of murder? If a man, says Hawkins, in his Pleas of the Crown, does an act of which the probable consequence may be, and eventually is, death, such killing may be murder, though no murder may be primarily intended. And

when the dram-seller does such an act, of which the probable consequence may be, and eventually is, death, such killing may be murder, though no murder may be primarily intended." But though we do not call such killing murder, and though it be not prosecuted as such in human courts, when we consider the numerous murders and other deaths to which the traffic in spirit leads, it is perfectly evident that the gains of that traffic are the price of blood, and as such will be viewed and treated at the judgment-day.

Now let us go only a step further, and we shall see that the salvation of the community from this fell destroyer, is in the hands of *the young men*. Let them with united voice refuse to engage in the traffic, and in a few years it must cease. The present generation of rum-sellers, like the present generation of rum-drinkers, will go off the stage; and if none supply their places from the ranks of the young, this

will become a sober world. At all events, you, my young friends, can individually form and keep the purpose of letting it alone, as to its use and sale. You can live and die temperate, and with your hands unstained with a traffic, the results of which are crimes past counting, and miseries undescribed and untold.

As an appropriate conclusion to this topic, I add the following significant remarks and confession. The first is from the address of the judge, in pronouncing sentence of death upon young Orcutt, for arson, at Utica; the second, the confession of a rum-seller: –

"The history of this case shows that you have attained to a maturity of vice beyond your years; and your precocity in crime, and your coolness in its commission, can only be accounted for upon the supposition that your history for that evening previous to the fire is but an epitome of the history of your life – that

you have been in the habit of going, night after night, *from one billiard-saloon to another, and from billiard-table to bowling-alley, partaking of the dissipations of each*, until all moral sensibility and every right feeling had ceased to exist, conscience had been seared, and every base passion had been stimulated and excited to the utmost.

"*These places are the nurseries of crime, the very gates of perdition; and from among those who habitually resort to them, our state prisons are filled, and the gallows claims its victims*. By them your ruin for this world has been accomplished, and sorrow and anguish unspeakable have been brought upon your family and friends. There are hundreds of others, the young of our land, who are not yet lost, but who are treading in your footsteps – rapidly travelling that downward road, the end of which you have so soon reached – who should be warned by your fate, and stop now, while yet they may. May they learn

that neither happiness nor safety consists with a life of idleness and dissipation, and the way of the transgressor is hard, – and that as they value their lives and their liberty, their interests for time and eternity, or the peace and happiness of their friends, they should resist the first temptation to dissipation and to crime."

"A short time since," says a correspondent of The American Messenger, "I was called to the bed-side of a sick man. He was a rum-seller. In health he seemed to be perfectly contented with his unhallowed traffic, but now he was changed. His physician entertained no hopes of his recovery. The poor man was racked with bodily pain, but this seemed nothing compared with his anguish of mind. He was the son of Scotch parents. In early life he had been instructed in the Scriptures, and he was able now to quote many passages with remarkable accuracy. He had intelligent views of the plan of

salvation, – and thought that God, in his mercy through Christ, would forgive him, if he had not been engaged in such business. 'But now,' said he, 'there is no hope for me – I have been making a living *at the mouth of hell*!'

"To the surprise of all, that man recovered, and is now engaged in the same business, at the same place! The poor man, doubtless, now regards the view he then had as an illusion; but we have reason to fear that at the final day it will prove a reality."

Among the dangers which lurk along the pathway of the young, few are greater, more insidious, and more pernicious in their consequences, than those which lure to *the licentious indulgence of the passions*.

In the Bible we find "most said where most is needed;" and on no subject are its warnings more urgent or more frequent than on this: –

"When wisdom entereth into thy heart,
And knowledge is pleasant unto they soul,
Discretion shall preserve thee,
Understanding shall keep thee:
To deliver thee from the strange woman,
Even from the stranger that flattereth with her words;
Which forsaketh the guide of her youth,
And forgetteth the covenant of her God.
Her house inclineth unto death,
And her paths unto the dead.
None that go unto her return,
Neither take they hold of the paths of life.
For the lips of a strange woman drop as a honeycomb,
And her mouth is smoother than oil:
But her end is bitter as wormwood,
Sharp as a two-edged sword.
Her feet go down to death,
Her steps take hold on hell.
Lest thou shouldst ponder the path of life,
Her ways are movable, that thou canst not know them.
Remove thy way from her,
And come not nigh the door of her house;
Lest thou give thine honour unto others,
And thy years unto the cruel;
Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth,
And thy labours be in the house of a stranger;
And thou mourn at the last,
When thy flesh and thy body are consumed,
And say, How have I hated instruction,
And my heart despised reproof;

And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers,
Nor inclined mine ear unto them that instructed me!
Lust not after her beauty in thy heart,
Neither let her take thee with her eyelids;
For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread,
And the adulteress will hunt for the precious life.
Can a man take fire in his bosom,
And his clothes not be burned?
Can one go upon hot coals,
And his feet not be burned?
A wound and dishonour shall he get,
And his reproach shall not be wiped away."

This picture, drawn nearly three thousand years since, is the exact portrait of this vice in our own times. The lures and the guilt – the victim going like the ox to the slaughter, and no more to return to the paths of life – the wound, the blot, and the dishonour – the shame, the loathsomeness, and the flesh and the body consumed, – these are accompaniments of this vice the world over.

"However it may be accounted for," says Paley, "these criminal indulgences

deprave the mind and moral character more than any single species of vice whatever. That ready perception of guilt, that prompt and decisive resolution against it, which constitute a virtuous character, are seldom [never] found in persons addicted to licentiousness. They prepare the way for an easy admission of every sin that seeks a place in the heart; are, in low life, usually the first stages in men's progress to the most desperate villanies, and, in high life, to that lamentable dissoluteness of principle, which manifests itself in a profligacy of public conduct, and a contempt of the obligations of religion and of moral probity. Add to this, that habits of libertinism incapacitate and indispose the mind for all intellectual, moral, and religious pleasures. They also perpetuate a disease, which may be accounted one of the sorest maladies of human nature; the effects of which are said to visit the constitution of even distant generations."

Indeed, when we consider the injury to both the guilty parties, by the depravation of their moral principle, the distressing anxiety occasioned to the most injured, her loss of reputation and prospect of marriage, her banishment from society, or, at the best, a mere tolerance there, under mortification and neglect; the injuries inflicted upon parents, brothers, and sisters; the fearful alternative to which she is frequently driven – to starve for want of employment, or plunge into a life of crime, the loathsomeness and the guilt of which, it is impossible to describe, – the person, old or young, who can allow himself to enter upon a career which directly or indirectly leads to these appalling results, scarcely deserves the name of man, and certainly is unfit for the society of human beings. And that every form of licentiousness does, directly or indirectly, lead to such results, is too plain to require the support of argument. The miserable creatures who

throng our large cities and populous villages – repaying the injuries they have received at the hands of the other sex with a vengeance so terrible -- once had a home; once were blithe and light-hearted, sporting in all the innocence of childhood; once prattled on a mother's knee, and enjoyed a father's tender caresses; and by *somebody's* connivance or villany, – probably enough, solemn protestations of affection and promises of marriage, – they have been reduced to their present mode of life, despoiled of peace and hope, and made as wretched as they are depraved. In vain, therefore, is it said by the frequenters of those places, for which decency has not a name: – "They are no victims of our wiles; we found them corrupted already." Every frequenter of a house of infamy, becomes a partner *in the guilt of the whole system*; his money, his example, and his influence, go to *perpetuate* the wickedness; he has his share in the guilt incurred by all the

falsehoods, hypocrisies, and perjuries of the seducer; in all the treacherous and cruel arts by which the keepers of these houses replenish them with new victims; in all the crimes by which the lives of fond mothers are crushed, and fathers carried *broken-hearted* to the grave. In one word, my young friends, there is scarcely anything heartless, vulgar, treacherous, loathsome, or polluted, that is not included in that one word *libertinism*. That young men are often, in the first instance, the tempted, and not the tempters, is unquestionably true, that older wretches, steeped in their debaucheries, and half-putrefied in their crimes, are lying in wait to corrupt the youth, and even the mere stripling, by the arts they know so well how to practise; and that the impudent woman lies in wait at the corners of the streets, to lure the inexperienced from the paths of virtue, is, alas! but too true.

It is said, that not only have the keepers of houses of ill-fame their hired agents, lurking about places of public resort, to lure unsuspecting young men to these dens of infamy, but that they have to their employ, at the principal hotels of our large cities, persons in the garb and with the manners of gentlemen, who make it their business to seduce young men, especially those from the country, to these chambers of death. But all this forms no sort of excuse; nor will it in the least shield from that terrible retribution which God has ordained as the award of a crime, of which *there is scarce a greater*. This is a danger against which I would especially warn you, not only because the crime is great, the temptations many and strong, and the results terrible, but because the voice of the parent and the pastor seems in general to be alike silent on the subject.

Before I dismiss this subject, I must caution you against those writers of works

of fiction, of *the Rousseau school*, who so intermingle truth and falsehood, so dexterously confound vice and virtue, "that the virtues they exhibit are almost more dangerous than the vices. The chief materials out of which they frame their delusive systems, are characters who practise superfluous acts of generosity, while they are trampling on obvious and commanded duties; who combine inflated sentiments of honour with actions the most flagitious; a high tone of self-confidence with a perpetual neglect of self-denial; pathetic apostrophes to the passions, but no attempts to resist them. They teach that chastity is only individual attachment; that no duty exists which is not prompted by feeling; that impulse is the main-spring of virtuous action; while laws and religion are only unjust restraints. There is a class who do not go quite the lengths of the above-named writers; yet their sentiments are perhaps even more dangerous, because less

repulsive. With them, the hero or heroine, who has practically violated the laws of chastity, is painted as so amiable, so benevolent, so tender, or so brave; and the temptation is represented as so irresistible, (for all these writers are fatalists;) the predominant and cherished sin is so filtered and divested of its pollutions, and is so sheltered and relieved by shining qualities, that the impressible young reader is brought to lose all horror of the awful crime in question, in the complacency indulged towards the interesting criminal." Beware of these writers; their touch is pollution, poison lurks in their every page.

Again: we should remember that the law of purity inculcates "constant vigilance in the government of our thoughts, desires, and imaginations; the avoiding of all books, pictures, conversation, and society, the tendency of which is to imbue our imaginations with anything at variance with the strictest chastity. Whatever in other

respects be the fascinations of a book, if it be impure or lascivious, let it be repudiated. Whatever be the accomplishments of an acquaintance, if he be not chaste in conversation or action, let him be shunned. No man can take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned. He cannot mingle with the vile, let that vileness be dressed in ever so tasteful a garb, without becoming defiled. The only safe rule is to avoid the *appearance of evil*; for thus alone shall we be likely to avoid the reality." – *Dr. Wayland.*

In conclusion, permit me to add a few words on a point already briefly, alluded to: – Beware, dear youth, of that class of men, older and more experienced than yourselves, who, under cover of an accomplished and pleasing exterior, allure young men into their society for the express purpose of corrupting their morals, and sinking them to those depths of depravity in which themselves are already engulfed.

There is not, this side of perdition, a more dangerous companion for a young man, than *an accomplished rake*. Incomparably worse than the man society hangs as a brutal ravisher, the wily seducer "selects as his favourite victims, the young, the artless, the confiding, the beautiful. He does not rush madly upon them, and forcibly rob them of their chastity. O, no! his appetite is more epicurean, and he has a pleasure in his art. He slowly insinuates himself into confidence. He is the deferential, gallant lover. He approaches with the dulcet notes of flattery. He weaves his infernal web to ensnare the heart. Gradually and patiently he encircles his unsuspecting prey, gloating all the while in anticipation of his final triumph. He assumes the air and the language of a man of honour, and offers honourable love, marriage, and a life of happiness in exchange for the love he asks. Through weeks, and months, and years of confiding happiness, he steadily pursues his

object, increasing day by day in his power over the affections he has won. At last the courted opportunity occurs. Steeping his soul in perjury, the too-confiding victim yields – yields to exchange hope for despair, peace for a gnawing conscience, gayety and innocence for wretchedness and guilt," while her destroyer lifts up his head, and glories in his shame. Thanks to a little sound legislation, recently enacted in this Empire State, some of this description are likely to find a regular home, and steady employment, within the walls of Sing Sing or Auburn.

Beware my young friends, of these men; their touch is pollution, their breath infection, and they glory in making others as vile and rotten as themselves. These wretches are everywhere to be found, leering in the box of the theatre, winking and nodding in the saloon of the steamboat, casting their lecherous glances on every attractive female they meet in the streets,

and seizing every opportunity to gather around them young men and half-grown boys, for the purpose of insidiously infusing the poison of licentiousness into the mind and heart. Fly from them as you would fly from the plague; listen not one moment to their conversation, or you are undone!

LECTURE IV.

DANGERS OF YOUNG MEN.

He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. – Prov. 13:20.

Suppose, my young friends, you were invited to visit a very fine garden, located in a fertile soil, beautifully laid out – borders, and parterres, walks and shrubbery combine to form a scene of loveliness on which the eye delights to gaze. In the midst of your admiration, a person bent on mischief passes along, and cast upon the wings of the breeze, which is just now fanning this lovely spot, a handful of the seeds of the thistle, the nettle, and other weeds, tenacious of life, and exceedingly difficult to eradicate. You will readily perceive that it would cost no little anxiety and labour to undo the mischief of that single act, accomplished in a moment of

time. Just so is it with the man who sows the seeds of infidelity in the hearts of the young. Like every portion of the soil of our earth, since it received a blight, because of man's sin, and now brings forth briers and thorns with a never-failing growth, while precious plants must be cultivated with untiring effort; so our fallen natures readily receive the seeds of error and vice, and yield spontaneously the harvests of evil. "The natural bias of youth is almost always towards scepticism or infidelity. And such is the case, not merely because, as Bacon says, 'A little philosophy inclines us to atheism, and a great deal of philosophy carries us back to religion;' but youth has an *intellectual* bias against religion, because it would humble the arrogance of the understanding; and a *moral* bias against it, because it would check the indulgence of the passions." Nothing could be more true than this statement; and it gives a clear reason why there is frequently a severe

conflict in the youthful breast, between truth and conscience on the one hand, and inclination on the other. It should impress upon parents, teachers and pastors, the importance of forewarning the young, that they may be forearmed; and it should inspire the young with caution, lest, in an unguarded moment, they imbibe sentiments which will do them no small amount of injury.

You will be told, my young friends: "That there is *no danger from error*, if truth be left free to combat it." This maxim assumes what is utterly false; it takes for granted that our nature is angelic, that man is not a sinful being, that he has no pride of self-sufficiency, and no depraved affections; that he invariably loves truth and hates error. Whereas the fact is, error is loved because it tolerates our vicious inclinations, – while truth is disliked, because it curbs and restrains them. "Light is come into the world, and men loved

darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil," said the Saviour.

Dr. Paley has set this matter in a clear and forcible light.

"A great many persons," says he, "before they proceed upon an act of known transgression, do expressly state to themselves the question, whether religion be true or not; and, in order to get at the object of their desire, (for the real matter to be determined is, whether they shall have their desire gratified or not;) in order, I say, to get at the pleasure, in some cases; or, in other cases, the point of interest, upon which they have set their hearts, they choose to decide, – and they do, in fact, decide with themselves, – that these things are not so certain, as to be a reason for them to give up the pleasure which lies before them, or the advantage, which is now, and which may never be again in their power to compass. This conclusion does actually take place, and, at various times,

must almost necessarily take place in the minds of men of bad morals. And now remark the effect which it has upon their thoughts afterwards. When they come at another future time to reflect upon religion, they reflect upon it as upon what they had before adjudged to be unfounded, and too uncertain to be acted upon, or to be depended upon: and reflections accompanied with this adverse and unfavourable impression, naturally lead to infidelity. Herein, therefore, is seen the fallacious operation of sin; first, in the circumstances under which men form their opinion and their conclusions concerning religions; and, secondly, in the effect which conclusions, which doubts so formed have upon their judgment afterwards. First, what is the situation of mind in which they decide concerning religion? and what can be expected from such a situation? Some magnified and alluring pleasure has stirred their desires and passions. It cannot be

enjoyed without sin. Here is religion denouncing and forbidding it on one side: there is opportunity drawing and pulling on the other. With this drag and bias upon their thoughts, they pronounce and decide concerning the most important of all subjects, and of all questions. If they should determine for the truth and reality of religion, they must sit down disappointed of a gratification upon which they had set their hearts, and of using an opportunity which may never come again. Nevertheless they must determine one way or other. And this process, viz., a similar deliberation, and a similar conclusion, is renewed and repeated as often as occasions of sin offer. The effect, at length, is a settled persuasion against religion; for what is it, in persons who proceed in this manner, which rests and dwells upon their memories? What is it which gives to their judgment its turn and bias? It is these occasional decisions often repeated; which

decisions have the same power and influence over the man's after-opinion, as if they had been made ever so impartially, or ever so correctly: whereas, in fact, they are made under circumstances which exclude almost the possibility of their being made with fairness, and with sufficient inquiry. Men decide under the power and influence of sinful temptation; but, having decided, the decision is afterwards remembered by them, and grows into a settled and habitual opinion, as much as if they had proceeded in it without any bias or prejudice whatever.

"But there is also a tacit rejection of religion, which has nearly the same effect. Whenever a man deliberately ventures upon an action which he knows that religion prohibits, he tacitly rejects religion. There may not pass in his thoughts every step which we have described, nor may he come expressly to the conclusion; but he acts upon the conclusion, he practically

adopts it. And the doing so will alienate his mind from religion, as surely almost as if he had formally argued himself into an opinion of its untruth."

Again: you will meet with attempts *to array science against Christianity*. The sublime science of astronomy, for instance, teaches a plurality of worlds; and, with an air of triumph, the sceptic asks: "Is it likely, that He who has so vast a number of worlds at his disposal, would pay so much attention to this *one*, as Christianity represents; that he would give even his *Son* to redeem it; that he would make a provision so stupendous for it alone?" It is thus that infidelity seeks to shame us out of our confidence in God our Saviour. Well may it be retorted in the indignant language of Campbell: –

"Are these the pompous tidings ye proclaim,
Lights of the world, and demi-gods of fame?
Is this your triumph, this your proud applause,
Children of truth, and champions of her cause?

For this has science search'd on weary wing,
By shore and sea – each mute and living thing;
Around the cope her living chariot driven,
And wheel'd in triumph through the signs of heaven?
O, star-eyed science! hast thou wander'd there,
To waft us home the message of despair?
Ah me! the laurell'd wreath that Murder wears,
Blood-nursed, and water'd by the widow's tears,
Seems not so foul, so tainted, and so dread,
As waves the night-shade round the sceptic's head."

We have no disposition to question the revelations of astronomy. Does astronomy assert that our world is but a small part of even the solar system? We admit it. Does she assert that there is strong reason to believe each star a sun, encompassed with a complete retinue of planets? We freely admit this. Does she go still farther, and proclaim it probably that these suns, with their attendant planets, are revolving around a grand central sun, larger than all these suns and planets in the aggregate. We have no objection to this; and we tell the objector, that ages before the birth of

these discoveries, the Bible, the book which he affects to scorn, spoke distinctly, not only of our world, as being, according to the teachings of modern astronomy, "*stretched out over the empty space, and hung upon nothing*," (see Job 26:7,) *but of a plurality of worlds*, (Heb. 1:2; see also Neh. 9:6; Job 9:8-9; Psa. 33:6).

Moreover, to dwell a moment on this favourite objection of scepticism. It assumes as the doctrine of Christianity, what Christianity nowhere asserts, or even intimates, namely: that the stupendous provision of mercy made for man is *limited in its influences and results entirely to our world*. That is; it assumes that Jehovah's government, instead of being *one great whole*, is *broken up into fragments*; that the lofty exhibitions of justice and grace, in this one part of his empire, have, and are to have, no connexion with, or influence upon, any other part. Now, while we deny that Christianity teaches any such thing, we

ask, for proof, *from any quarter*, that moral influence is to be thus restricted. Is it according to analogy? Is the influence of great truths and great actions, *in this world*, pent up within geographical limits? Did Howard's influence confine itself within the walls of the prison he visited? Did the influence of Leonidas's example produce no impression beyond the bounds of Thermopylæ? Is Washington's name known only at Trenton, Brandywine, and Jamestown? Did St. Paul, and Luther, and Wesley, give no impulse to the tide of truth, beyond the cities where their voices were literally heard? Or rather, did not the truths they proclaimed become influential over continents, and act upon unnumbered millions; and did they not give an impulse to the tide of truth that shall accelerate its progress to the end of time? And is that stupendous system of grace and justice embodied in Christianity, to be known and influential only upon the spot where the

scene was enacted? Or rather, if there be a central palace of Jehovah's domain, termed heaven; if his couriers, the angels of his presence, go forth as a "flame of fire," to the distant provinces of his wide-spread sovereignty, and return again to the centre of empire; if the redeemed of our earth are destined to be gathered there, and everyone appear as an illustrious trophy of transcendent grace, then does the assumption, that the moral influence of redemption is to be confined to this one world, "I vanish like the baseless fabric of a vision, and leave not a wreck behind."*

Before passing from this topic I will simply ask, If science and Christianity be irreconcilable, how happens it that such men as *Bacon* and *Boyle*, *Newton* and

*See Chalmer's Astronomical Discourses, which every young man should read. They have recently been published in a separate volume by Robert Carter and Brothers, New-York.

Haller, *Leibnitz*, *Pascal*, and *Euler*, were unable to discover it? If the young and yet imperfect science of geology be, as sceptics assert, at war with the Bible, how is it that numbers of the first geologists in Europe and America are firm believers in revelation? We need entertain neither doubts nor fears, my young friends, concerning the verdict of science. The God of nature is the God of revelation, and every discovery in science will be found in entire harmony with the truths of Christianity.

But again; you will hear it said: "The *incarnation of the Son of God*, is something altogether exceeding the bounds of probability or belief." To this it has been well replied: "That we are very incompetent judges of what it is probable God will do, or what he will not do. Who would suppose it probable, beforehand, that God would submit to rebuke and blasphemy from his own creatures? Yet

what being has been more calumniated? Who has been the object of more scorn? What is the offering that daily goes up from this world to the Maker of all worlds? Not a nation that does not daily send up a cloud of obscenity and profanity as its offering.

'The dwellers in the vale, and on the rocks,
Shout to each other from the mountain tops,
And distant mountains catch the flying curse;
Earth rolls the awful malediction round.'

Scarce a corner of the street can be turned, but one's ears are saluted with the sound of blasphemy; curses poured on Jehovah, on his Son, on his Spirit, on his government, and on his creatures. Is it more improbable that the Son of God should become incarnate for the redemption of man, than that he should from age to age bear this from an offending world? We have only to reflect on what human hands *would* do, if God should be embodied, and reveal himself in a form that human hands could

reach him, with nails, and spears, and mock diadems, to see what they actually *did* do, when the Son of God, incarnate, put himself in the power of blasphemers, and did not refuse to die."

And yet again you will hear it objected: "That in the Scriptures are many things hard to be understood;" while it is asserted, "That a revelation from God, intended to teach the way to heaven, should in all its announcements, be perfectly plain and intelligible."

To this we reply; that in all things *essential to present duty*, and *to the securing future safety*, *the Bible is perfectly intelligible*. Can anyone mistake those passages that pronounce man a sinner? Is there anything hard to be understood in that summary of duty: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon;" or

in that other: "Thou shalt love the Lord they God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself?" Are the ten precepts of the decalogue hard to be understood? Is not the duty of repentance sufficiently plain? Cannot even a well-informed child understand sufficiently for all practical purposes, that glorious announcement: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life?" Are those short, simple, but encouraging declarations, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find," likely to puzzle and bewilder?*

But still it is urged: "There are portions of Scripture hard to be understood." We allow it. Nay more – we

*Those portions of Scripture which are difficult, because of allusions to manners, customs, forms of government, and on account of idioms, oriental habits and opinions, can readily be mastered by the aid of a good Commentary and Bible Dictionary.

glory in it. It stamps upon the Bible the signet of divinity. Would we have a *revelation* without mysteries, when *nature* abounds with them? Could a revelation, which brings the mind in contact with God and ETERNITY be without its depths, too profound to be fathomed by our puny line; or heights, to which a child of yesterday cannot soar? "We should like to be told what stamp of inspiration there would be upon a Bible containing nothing hard to be understood. Is it not a self-evident proposition, that a revelation without difficulty, could not be a revelation of divinity? If there lie anything of that unmeasured separation, which we are all conscious there must lie, between ourselves and the Creator, is it not clear that God cannot be comprehended by man; and that, therefore, any professed revelation which left him not incomprehensible, would be thereby its own witness to the falsehood of its pretensions? We are asked for a Bible

which shall be in every part simple and intelligible. But could such a Bible treat of purposes which -- extending over unlimited ages, and embracing the universe within their ranges -- demand eternity for their development, and infinity for their theatre? The subject itself gives the difficulty. If you will not have the difficulty, you cannot have the subject. A revelation in which there shall be nothing hard to be understood, must limit itself by the powers of reason, and therefore exclude those very topics on which, reason being insufficient, revelation is required. And we are well persuaded, that however disposed men may be to make the difficulties an objection to the Bible, the absence of those difficulties would have been eagerly seized upon as a proof of imposture. We feel, indeed, while the volume of Holy Writ lies open before us, and facts are presented which seem every way infinite -- height and depth, and breadth and length, defying the boldest

journeying of the spirit -- we feel the quick pulse of an eager wish to scale the mountain, or fathom the abyss; but, at the same time, we know that a Bible without difficulties were a firmament without stars. We know that a far-off land, enamelled with a loveliness which is not of this earth, and inhabited by a tenantry gloriously distinct from our own order of being, would not be the magnificent and richly-peopled domain it is, if its descriptions overpassed not the outlines of human geography. We do not, indeed, believe a document inspired, merely because it is, in some of its announcements, incomprehensible. But if a document profess to be inspired; and if we can prove, beforehand, that the subjects on which it treats are above and beyond the stretchings of our intellect, -- then do we say, that finding nothing in such a document to baffle the understanding, would be proof the most conclusive, that

what alleges itself divine deserves rejection as a forgery."

I will close this point by an appropriate illustration.

Rev. Henry Moore says, in his autobiography: -- "Mr. John Wesley, shortly before his death, gave me this account concerning the Earl of Huntingdon. His lordship, who had a great personal respect for Mr. Wesley, as they were sitting alone together one day, observed, 'I should wish, sir, to have some conversation with you on the subject of religion; the lady, my mother, is too importunate with me on these matters.' Mr. Wesley assented, replying, 'What point would your lordship choose for discussion?' 'The difficulties of revelation,' it was subjoined. Mr. Wesley continued, 'My lord, had we not better begin with the difficulties of what is termed natural religion?' The earl replied, 'Sir, you surprise me; I thought there were no difficulties in natural religion.' Mr. Wesley

answered, 'My lord, there are difficulties; and such as I doubt neither you nor I can answer. What does your lordship think of the first point in all religion, the worship of an eternal God? What idea has your lordship of a Being without beginning and without end?' His lordship was silent for some time, and then expressed himself as 'utterly lost in the idea of such an existence.' 'And yet,' observed Mr. Wesley, 'you must believe it; can your lordship get on one step without believing it?' The reply was, 'I cannot.' 'Well, then,' added Mr. Wesley, 'my lord, in all religion we must take the very first point for granted, and that, too, with the highest reason; and yet we can form no conception of it; the idea of an eternal Being is too vast for finite intelligence: let us, then, converse a little respecting the evidences of religion.' Mr. Wesley being fully master of this subject, the conversation was long, interesting, and satisfactory. His lordship

made this objection, 'How can I be certain that this record, while I cannot deny any part of it, was ever realized by any man?' 'The same record, my lord, which assures you of the facts, gives the clearest account of those who testify to the facts; and in such a manner as, admitting one, doubt is shut out from the other; and I could bring you a hundred witnesses, out of the book, who can now, any day, assure you of the same facts.' 'O,' replied his lordship, 'my mother tells me enough of these; that would bring me to personal experience, which as yet I cannot receive.'

"And so the conversation ended; 'but,' observed Mr. Wesley, 'I have a good hope in reference to the earl; believing that for some time before his death his lordship was a changed man.'"

The earl of Huntingdon died in the prime of youthful vigour, in a fit of apoplexy, while sitting at table with a party of friends.

After all, my friends, your danger lies not so much, probably, in the cavils or assaults of open infidelity, *as in the insinuations of a* semi-infidelity, arrayed in the garb, and baptized with the name of a "*liberal Christianity*." We cannot too often, or too earnestly admonish the young to beware of *loose sentiments* in religion. They may be known, whatever garb they assume, for they all differ radically from the doctrines and teachings of the Book of God. The first thing my Bible teaches me is, that I am a sinner; that "*the heart is deceitful above all things* and *desperately wicked*." That "*the carnal mind is enmity against God*." One of the prime declarations of my Saviour is, "*I know you, that the love of God is not in you*;" and, "*Except a man be born again, he can in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven*."

In direct opposition to this, these apostles of a cold and lifeless morality, whether they speak from the pulpit or by

the press, begin by telling me of the dignity of human nature; of its amiability; of its many virtues, and great moral excellencies; of its ability, without any "new birth," or "new creation in righteousness," to rise to the heights of holiness, and keep all the commandments of God.

When the Bible talks of the Son of God, my Saviour, it tells me: "By him were all things created that are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things; and by him all things consist;" and that I should "honour the Son, even as I honour the Father." Here it tells me of one who *created* me *by himself*, and *for himself*; and *by whom all things consist*; "God over all, blessed forevermore."

But these teachers assert that He, my Creator, is but himself a created being, as far from divine as the finite is from the

infinite; and, of course, that to render him supreme worship is downright idolatry.

When I go to my Bible, to ask how the crimson stains of sin can be washed away, I receive for answer: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin."

But these latitudinarian teachers deny the efficiency of Christ's blood; they deny that Christ was, in any such sense as the Bible teaches, "wounded for my transgressions, and bruised for my iniquity;" that he "died the just *for* the unjust." And if I ask, How then can I be pardoned? I find they entertain no such views of guilt as my Bible teaches; and what little of demerit they ascribe to sin, they teach me is to be pardoned by *sovereignty*, and not by the *atonement*.

My Bible comes to me as an *accuser*; they as *flatterers*. My Bible humbles me in the very dust; teaching me as a sinner to "abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." They inflate with vanity and

pharisaism. My Bible teaches me that the province of human reason is to determine, by a careful examination of its external and internal evidences, whether it be indeed a revelation from God; and, having settled this question, to receive its teachings with all the docility of "a little child." They teach proud reason, -- that "critic fly, whose feeble ray spreads scarce an inch around," -- to bring *the very substance* of Jehovah's book before its petty tribunal, that reason may determine what it should and what it should not teach.

My Bible lays powerful restraint upon my natural inclination to evil, warning by all the terrors of a coming judgment, and all the sorrows of a world of despair, to break off my sins by righteousness. But the advocate of this *free-and-easy religion* say, in substance: "Be good and virtuous, it is right and best; but if you do not, you shall be just as safe, and reach heaven just as soon." I see them using the Bible as a text-

book, and hear them uttering the terms, *sin* and *Saviour*, *atonement* and *regeneration*, *repentance* and *inspiration*; but when I come to inquire, I find they attach very different ideas to them from those which the common-sense interpretation would teach, and from those which have constituted the faith of the orthodox Church in all ages. Moreover, I find that, while under the preaching of the apostles, men were conscience-stricken, were "pricked in the heart," and cried out, "Men and brethren what shall we do?" the preaching of this "liberal Christianity," tends only to make the proud and the worldly, the vain and the prayerless, extremely well satisfied with themselves -- trusting that they shall be saved without trouble, because all will be saved. Build not your hopes of heaven, my young friends, on these quicksands. Let not the cant terms, "liberality," "a liberal religion," and "a liberal Christianity," beguile you into *real*

infidelity, ere you are aware of it. Go not after the teachers of these fatal errors; read not their books, lest conscience be lulled to sleep, and awake not till it be too late to repair the evil.

I know not that I can better close these friendly admonitions, or more forcibly impress the caution, "Beware of scepticism in all its forms," than by presenting you with the following striking illustration: --

"D------ Y----- was a young man of highly-respectable and wealthy parentage -- the pride of his father, and the boast of his family. Having finished his classical education at U----- College, he commenced the study of law in the city of -----, in the state of New-York.

"The gentleman with whom he was engaged in the pursuit of legal science, was given to the occasional indulgence of the cup, -- and was, withal, strongly inclined to sceptical views on the subject of

Christianity. Our young student, although piously educated -- for his father was a devoted man of God -- admiring, in common with others, the talents of his master, could easily apologize for his corrupt habits, as the result of infirmities not uncommon to great men; while he was prepared to look upon that independence of spirit -- which could dare to call in question the divine authority of a religion which had received the sanction of ages -- as indicative of altogether a superior order of mind. Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that he should begin to look with a jealous eye upon the religion of his father. Such was the fact. He gave himself to the reading of the infidel books which were current at that time -- it being now about thirty years since -- and because, as he supposed, a confirmed infidel.

"He did not disclose his views to his father until some years after he had completed the study of the law, and had

himself engaged in the active business of life. The disclosure, when made, was deeply painful to the heart of his good old father. But he was his darling son; he was a man of talents, highly respected, of fine manners, and high promise. By those modest, and seemingly honest suggestions of doubt on certain points connected with the Christian system -- as on the doctrine of the Trinity, for instance -- he would work his insidious way to his father's heart, and so far stagger the good man's faith, as often to fill him with the deepest gloom, and agonize his soul with despairing apprehensions about the great subject of his immortal hopes.

"In this manner some two or three years passed away, -- the son labouring to work his father over to infidelity, and the father struggling to maintain his hold on God. At length the painful conflict of faith with infidelity was brought to a close. The father sickened, and, with a countenance

beaming with the hope of glory, and his eye fixed on Jesus as the resurrection and the life, died.

"No sooner had the spirit of the father fled, than floods of conviction -- torrents of deep and overwhelming anguish -- rolled upon the son. In his distress he cried to God, confessed his infidelity, blessed the memory of his father, and thanked God how had kept him steadfast to the end. His scepticism vanished in a moment. He felt that his soul was left naked and utterly defenceless before the majesty of that Redeemer whom he had affected to despise.

"The sins of his life seemed to concentrate into two points, -- the one, that he had contemned Jesus Christ; the other, that he had laboured to persuade his father to abjure his religion. With reference to each of these points, he viewed himself with the most profound abhorrence and detestation. He had been filled with the

pride of intellectual superiority. His mind was altogether above the influence of what he would term 'the superstitious notions' which controlled others. He had himself accumulated a fortune, and he anticipated a large inheritance from his father; but all these things were annihilated from his view, when the Spirit of God set his sins in order before him.

"His mental agony, at times, seemed almost insupportable. He often prostrated himself on the carpet in his room, in the presence of the writer, and would call over the name of his father, and speak of his virtues, and his prayers. 'Yes,' he would say, 'prayers for your base, your unnatural son D----- Y-----, who, but for the interposition of a merciful God, had persuaded you, O my father! my father! to abjure your blessed Saviour.' At the mentioning of the name of the Saviour, he would break forth in prayer, and pour out his soul to all but utter exhaustion, in the

depth of his agony. Often, when walking the floor, he would cry out, in the anguish of his spirit: "Wretch that I am -- I have denied my Saviour -- I am guilty of the sin of damning my father's soul, -- because it would have been damned, if God had not held him up. I wanted to make my father an infidel, and in that desire I had the spirit of a devil.'

"The writer went with him, on a certain occasion, to visit a friend who was employed in conducting a furnace. We were in the establishment at the time the workmen were pouring out the melted ore, like liquid fire. After having looked at it for a few moments, he turned to me, and with trembling lip, his face pale as death, said, --

"'My friend, were that lava to be poured upon my flesh, the pain it would inflect would be less than the agony, and anguish, and horror of mind which I experience, almost incessantly, during my

wakeful moments, and which often fill my nightly visions. There is no need that hell should be composed of elemental fire, as a means of punishing the ungodly. Sir, God has let my conscience loose upon me, and that is more painful to me than if I were bathed, as to my body, in that liquid element. The fire that burns within fastens upon the soul -- the spiritual portion of man. The agony which it occasions, is the agony of an immortal nature; and God has chosen the most highly-adapted elements in the material world, to convey to our minds, as far as the nature of the case admits, some appropriate idea of the inconceivable intensity of that anguish which the soul will feel, when he shall leave it to prey upon itself to all eternity.'

"A man who had so sinned against the instructions of his youth, who had so much and so long troubled the faith, and darkened the hopes of a pious father, and poured such contempt on the cross of Christ, might

well be expected to endure no ordinary conviction. Under the anguish of mind which has here been but feebly portrayed, he continued for the space of nearly three months, when it pleased God to beam upon his soul with the mild influence of hope. He became a most devoted disciple of Jesus, and a bold defender of his cause. His voice was heard in the conference-room, and in the social praying circle, in humble acknowledgment, as being one born, like Paul, "out of due time," and brought back, by the hand of sovereign mercy, from the very mouth of hell. He has, some years since, gone to his rest, where, doubtless, he has met the sainted spirit of his father, – and where, amid the mighty company of the redeemed, we trust he is contributing, to the full extent of his immortal powers, to swell the tide of heavenly song.

"Let it be remembered, that it is one thing to scout at the idea of an elemental

hell, as many infidels and Universalists do, under the persuasion, cheering to an impenitent heart, that now they may indulge in sin without the apprehension of danger, – and that it is quite another to break away from the control of that mighty God, 'who knows how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.' Let the experience of the subject of this narrative be remembered, and the import of that solemn declaration be well weighed: 'Sir, God has let my conscience loose upon me.'"

In extremity, nature is no sceptic. "Duroc," said Napoleon, as he pressed the hand of the dying warrior, "*there is another world – we shall meet again.*" "Memorable words," says Alison, "wrung by anguish, even from the child of infidelity and the Revolution."

David Hume, the historian, was an avowed deist: he even went so far as to assert, "that there are no solid arguments to

prove the existence of a God;" and yet hear his confession in one of his honest moments. "I am affrighted and confounded," says he, "with the forlorn condition in which I am placed by my philosophy, [scepticism.] When I look abroad, I foresee on every side dispute, contradiction, and distraction; when I turn my eye inward, I find nothing but doubt and ignorance. Where am I? or what? To what causes do I owe my existence? and to what condition shall I return? I am confounded with these questions; and begin to fancy myself *in the most deplorable condition imaginable, environed with the deepest darkness*."

Voltaire's is not less striking. It is indeed more so. It is not only the confession of his own misery, but of that great Scripture doctrine, the depravity and built of human nature. "Who can without horror," says he, "consider the whole earth as the empire of destruction? It abounds in

wonders; it abounds also in victims. It is a vast field of carnage and contagion. Every species is without pity pursued and torn to pieces, through the earth, the air, and water. In man there is more wretchedness than in all the other animals put together. He smarts continually under two scourges which other animals never feel – anxiety and listlessness – which make him wary of himself. He loves life, and yet knows that he must die. If he enjoys some transient good, for which he is thankful to Heaven, he suffers various evils, and is at last devoured by worms. This knowledge is his fatal prerogative; other animals have it not. He feels it every moment rankling and corroding in his breast. Yet he spends the transient moment of his existence in diffusing the misery that he suffers; in cutting the throats of his fellow-creatures for pay; in cheating and being cheated; in robbing and being robbed; in serving that he may command; and in repenting of all

he does. The bulk of mankind are nothing more than a crowd of wretches, equally criminal, and equally unfortunate; and the globe contains rather carcasses than men. I tremble on a review of this dreadful picture, to find that it implies a complaint against Providence, and *I wish that I had never been born*."

Rousseau, too, had his lucid moments. In one of those moments the truth seems to have flashed upon his mind with the brilliancy of noon-day; and then it was that he drew the character of the Author of Christianity, with an eloquence and force never, perhaps, surpassed by an uninspired pen.

"I will confess to you," says he, "that the majesty of the Scriptures strikes me with admiration, as the purity of the gospel has its influence upon my heart. Peruse the works of our philosophers, with all their pomp of diction, – how mean, how contemptible are they, compared with the

Scriptures! Is it possible that such a book, at once so simple and so sublime, should be merely the work of man? Is it possible, that the sacred personage whose history it contains, should be himself a mere man? Do we find that he assumed the tone of an enthusiast, or ambition of a sectary? What sweetness, what purity in his manners! What unaffecting gracefulness in his delivery! What sublimity in his fulness in his delivery! What sublimity in his maxims! What profound wisdom in his discourses! What presence of mind in his replies! How great the command over his passions! Where is the man, where the philosopher, who could so live and so die, without weakness, and without ostentation? When Plato described his imaginary good man, with all the shame of guilt, yet meriting the highest rewards of virtue, he describes exactly the character of Jesus Christ; the resemblance was so striking, that all the Christian fathers perceived it.

"What prepossession, what blindness must it be, to compare the son of Sophroniscus [Socrates] to the Son of Mary! What in infinite disproportion is there between them! Socrates, dying without pain or ignominy, easily supported his character to the last; and if his death, however easy, had not crowned his life, it might have been doubted whether Socrates, with all his wisdom, was anything more than a vain sophist. He invented, it is said, the theory of morals. Others had, however, before, put them in practice. He had only to say, therefore, what they had done, and to reduce their examples to precept; but where could Jesus learn, among his competitors, that pure and sublime morality, of which he only has given us both precept and example?

"The death of Socrates, peaceably philosophizing with his friends, appears the most agreeable that could be wished for; that of Jesus, expiring in the midst of

agonizing pains – abused, insulted, and cursed by a whole nation – is the most horrible that could be feared. Socrates, in receiving the cup of poison, blessed the weeping executioner who administered it; but Jesus, in the midst of excruciating tortures, prayed for his merciless tormentors! Yes! if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus were those of a God!

"Shall we suppose the evangelic story a mere fiction? Indeed, my friends, it bears not the marks of fiction: on the contrary, the history of Socrates, which nobody presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ. Such a supposition, in fact, only shifts the difficulty, without obviating it. It is more inconceivable that a number of persons should agree to write such a history, than that one only should furnish the subject of it. The Jewish authors were incapable of the diction, and strangers to the morality contained in the

gospel, – the marks of whose truth are so striking and inimitable, that the inventor would be a more astonishing character than the hero."

What a mind, to conceive ideas so beautiful and so just! The dignity of the New Testament is displayed as with a sunbeam. But, alas! Rousseau's whole life, as unblushingly avowed in his "Confessions," was a tissue of falsehood and profligacy: "He loved darkness rather than light, because his deeds were evil." When, therefore, he subjoins, as he does, "I cannot believe the gospel," he should rather have said, "I will not obey the gospel."

LECTURE V.

SAFEGUARDS OF YOUNG MEN.

"Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?" – Jer. 3:4.

"IN the outset of life, we are in a state between sleeping and waking; we have indistinct but glorious glimpses of strange shapes; and there is always something to come better than we see. So I have loitered my life away – reading books, looking at pictures, going to plays, hearing, thinking, writing, on what pleased me best. I have wanted only one thing to make me happy; but wanting that, have wanted everything. As we advance, we exhaust our fund of enjoyment and of hope. We are no longer lulled in elysium. As we taste the pleasures of life, their spirit evaporates, the sense

palls, and nothing is left but the phantoms, the lifeless shadows of what *has been*."

This is the language, my young friends, of one who possessed more than ordinary powers; one who might have accomplished much; and, having enjoyed "the luxury of doing good," as he passed along, might, at the close of life, have looked back with pleasure, and forward with joyful anticipations of a most glorious future. But, like many others, he weighed anchor and put to sea with no particular port in view; and he became the sport of every wind and current that chose to seize upon him. The result we hear from his own lips: "I have loitered my life away, reading books, looking at pictures, and going to plays. *I have wanted only one thing to make me happy; but wanting that, I have wanted everything.*" The lesson we should learn from this, and a thousand similar confessions, is, that an *aimless* life is, of necessity, a miserable and a useless life;

nay, in a vast majority of instances, it is a corrupt and a vicious one. The vices that surround us, finding us unemployed and unarmed, like pirates upon the high seas, first make us prisoners, and then compel us to unite in their pursuits.

The first inquiries we individually propound to ourselves should therefore be: "What object have I in view? What do I propose to do in the world? Is my plan worthy of myself? and is it feasible? and to what results will it lead? In one word, How am I to escape the dangers that beset me, and how attain the good within my reach?" To the topic embraced in the former member of the last question, I shall invite your attention, *by naming a few of the safeguards, of which you may and should avail yourselves in the journey of life.*

1. *Beware of the beginnings of evil.* No precept can be more important. Everything has its beginning. The oak of

centuries was once an acorn, that you might have crushed with your foot. The mighty Mississippi commences a streamlet, which you may dam up with your hand. The conflagration which consumes millions, and reduces the princes of commerce or merchandise to beggary, begins with a spark, that might be extinguished by a child. It is a law of Providence as well as of nature, that everything shall have its seed, its germ, its small beginning. No one becomes at once a knave, a drunkard, a gambler, or an infidel. "Whatever tendencies nature may have imparted in the first instance, we shall find the moral constitution composed of the contributions of years and events; and *consolidated, by degrees, into what we call character*."

But *there is a beginning somewhere* – a seed which germinates and gathers to itself nutriment, until it becomes the sturdy oak – a nucleus with which begins the process of aggregation. Mark now that

finished gambler – adept in all the villanies of his craft – without a sentiment of honour, or scarce a feeling of humanity! He was not always what he now is; and though it may have required years to obliterate all the principles of honour, and to steel his heart to all the sympathies of humanity, yet there was *a starting-point*, without which he had never reached his present position. That starting-point was very likely his first game of cards, commenced to while away an idle hour; or his first throw of the dice, merely for idle sport. Or, quite as likely, leaving home for business while yet a youth, – away from the watchful eye of an assiduous father, from the affectionate counsel of a tender mother, and the company of sisters, – he found himself amid the promiscuous company of a boarding-house; was invited to an evening walk; entered, from mere idle curiosity, a saloon splendidly illuminated, and gorgeously furnished; sat or stood

awhile looking at the pictures and various adornments; went away and returned; finally, out of mere curiosity, ventured into an adjoining room where play was going briskly on; looked on with an interest that increased with each returning visit; drank, and smoked, and looked again; ventured a small sum, just to try his luck; imbibed at length a passion for play, lost, of course, his relish for business, and turned out a gambler, as you now see him.

So you might trace the drunkard's career, from the first glass at the sideboard, or in the convivial assembly, until his wife has died of a broken heart; his children are scattered among friends, or gone to the poor-house; and himself, a poor wreck of humanity, is entombed in the drunkard's grave.

So also may you trace the bold and malignant infidel – whose language makes your blood chill, and from whom you start back aghast – back to the stripling Sabbath-

breaker, the juvenile trifler with things sacred, the loquacious beardless youth, whose combination of pride, ignorance, and conceit, and whose precocious audacity used to make you tremble, even then, for the results of these early essays at impiety. If, my young friends, the annals of a single village could be accurately written, or the history of a few individuals clearly delineated – I refer, of course, to that class over whose memories society chooses to draw the veil of oblivion – nothing would appear clearer, or impress us more powerfully, than the fact, that the *first step in the wrong direction, invariably inclines us to take the second, and that our only rational hope of safety depends upon our avoiding the beginnings of evil.* Beware then my young friends, of little departures from the path of rectitude. Adhere to your principles; deviate not in the least; take not a step on forbidden ground; against every solicitation be firm as a rock.

2. *Take heed how you spend your leisure hours*. More persons have a portion of time which they can employ as they choose. This is more particularly the case with young men, unencumbered with the cares of a family, the responsibilities of professional life, or the conducting of business establishments. The studies of the school-room, the labours of the sales-room, the work-shop, or the field, being ended, there is an hour in the summer evening, or a vacant half-day on Saturday, or a long winter evening, with an occasional holiday, to be spent as we please. These, in the aggregate, form no inconsiderable portion of each year; and these are not seldom the hours that *make* or *ruin* us. The student who spends them in riot, whether in the room of an idle and profligate fellow-student, or amid the excitements and debaucheries of a large and corrupt city – the clerk who hastily finishes his supper that he may hasten to the saloon or the

bowling-alley – the apprentice, who speeds him to the bar-room or the oyster saloon of the country village – or the young man who sits till ten or eleven o'clock at night, by the farm-house fire, reading the "Pirate's Own Book," or the latest translation from the pen of Eugene Sue, or George Sand, feasting his soul on tales of ferocity, lust, or blood – will find these leisure hours his bane and curse. While he who spends them in the midst of elevating associations – in reading, seeing, and hearing what is worth reading, seeing, and hearing – will find them conducive to his pleasure, profit, and security. It was these leisure hours that raised William Gifford and Samuel Drew from the low abodes of poverty and ignorance to the high walks of knowledge and science. Thus rose Franklin, and Rittenhouse, and Sherman.

A glover's apprentice, in Edinburgh, resolved to qualify himself for a higher profession. The relation with whom he

lived was very poor, and could not afford a candle, and scarcely a fire at night. As it was only after shop hours that this young man had leisure, he had no alternative but to go into the streets at night, and plant himself, with his book, near a shop-window, the lights of which enabled him to read it; and when they were put out, he used to climb a lamp-post, and hold on with the one hand while he held his book with the other. That person lived to be one of the greatest oriental scholars in the world, and the first book in Arabic printed in Scotland was his production.

Said the distinguished Chatham to his son: "I would have inscribed on the curtains of your bed, and the walls of your chamber,' If you do not rise early, you can never make progress in anything. If you do not set apart your hours of reading – if you suffer yourself, or anyone else, to break in upon them – your days will slip through

your hands unprofitable and frivolous, and really unenjoyed by yourself."

"Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves," is the maxim of those who pursue wealth. "Take care of the minutes, and the hours will take care of themselves," should be the maxim of those who seek safety and desire knowledge.

3. *Cultivate a taste for reading.*

"If," says Fenelon, "the riches of the Indies, the crowns of all the kingdoms of Europe, were laid at my feet in exchange for my love of reading, I would spurn them all."

"Were I to pray for a taste," says Sir John Herschel, "which should stand me in stead, under every variety of circumstances, and be a source of happiness and cheerfulness to me during life, and a shield against its ills, however things might go amiss, and the world frown upon me, it would be a taste for reading.....Give a man

this taste, and the means of gratifying it, and you can hardly fail of making a happy man, unless, indeed, you put into his hands a most perverse selection of books. You place him in contact with the best society, in every period of history – with the wisest, the wittiest, the tenderest, the bravest, and the purest characters that have adorned humanity. You make him a denizen of all nations, a contemporary of all ages. The world has been created for him."

Burton, the author of that most curious and learned work, the "Anatomy of Melancholy," thus discourses: "Looking about the world of books, I could even here live and die, with such meditations, and take more delight and true content of mind in them, than in all wealth and courts. There is a sweetness which, as Circe's cup, bewitches a student. He cannot leave off! as well may witness those many laborious hours, days, and nights spent in their voluminous treatises – so sweet is the

delight of study. Heinsius was mewed up in the library of Leyden all the year long. 'I no sooner,' saith he, 'come into the library, than I bolt the door to me, excluding lust, ambition, avarice, and all such vices, whose muse is idleness, the mother of ignorance and melancholy. In the very lap of eternity, among so many divine souls, I take my seat with so lofty a spirit, and sweet content, that I pity all our great ones, and rich men, that know not this happiness.'"

Rantzau, the founder of the great library at Copenhagen, whose days are dissolved in the pleasures of reading, discovers his taste and ardour in an elegant effusion thus imitated by D'Israeli:--

"Golden volumes! richest treasures!
Objects of delicious pleasures!
You my eyes rejoicing please –
You my hands in rapture seize;
Brilliant wits and musing sages,
Lights who beam'd through may ages,
Left to your conscious leaves the story,

And dare to trust you with their glory –
And now, their hope of fame achieved,
Dear volumes, you have not deceived!"

It is not, of course, expected or desired, that every young man should "mew himself up in a library." It is not desirable that everyone should aim at exploring the depths of science, spend his life in gazing at the stars, or in reading all the books to be found in college libraries. But it is desirable that every young man should cultivate a taste for reading – a taste for that kind of reading which improves both the intellect and the heart – which aids in preparing us for discharging the duties we owe to God, to society, and to ourselves. Such a taste is an acquisition of priceless value. It is a safeguard, by the employment it affords; through this medium we imbibe the best principles, and the highest examples of intelligent virtue are presented for our imitation. For my part, when I see a young man, on entering

a library, or when sitting down to a table on which are lying several books, seizing the first opportunity which common courtesy allows him to lay hold of a volume – if I see him, with a well-disciplined mind, or by a sort of intuitive sagacity, select one of the best, the richest in thought, and most forcible in diction, and especially one most elevating in tendency – I begin to entertain not merely a respect for his intellect, but a sort of liking for him, as though he must have something in him, that will one day make a man of him, – an honourable, high-minded, and useful man. If, on the contrary, I see a valuable book or a whole library of valuable books, lying before a young man, and he cast no eager glances towards them, evince no longing to get hold of them – if he can sit unmoved amid these productions of the illustrious living and the mighty dead – I begin to wonder what material he can be made of; what sort of an incrustation has encased his intellect; and

whether, indeed, it will ever burst its walls, and its possessor vindicate his title to a place among intelligent beings. *Cultivate*, my young friends, a taste for reading; even if you have it not, you may easily acquire it. It only requires a little decision and perseverance. Begin, not for mere amusement, or mental excitement, but for improvement. "Read, not to reject or condemn, and not hastily to receive; but to weigh and consider."

"Readers," says Coleridge, "may be divided into four classes. The first may be compared to an hour-glass, their reading being as the sand; it runs in and runs out, and leaves not a vestige behind. A second class resembles a sponge, which imbibes everything, and returns it in nearly the same state, – only a little dirtier. A third class is like a jelly-bag, which allows all that is pure to pass away, and retains only the refuse and the dregs. The fourth class may be compared to the slave in the diamond

mines in Golconda, who, casting aside all that is worthless, preserves only the pure gem."

Select your books with care, and read, that your minds may be enriched with the treasures of a truly *useful knowledge*. "Few are sufficiently sensible of the importance of that economy in reading, which selects almost exclusively *the very first order of books*. Why, except for some special reason, read an inferior book, at the very time you might be reading one *of the highest order*?"

4. *Another safeguard will be found in independence of character.* By independence of character, I mean nothing allied to pride, obstinacy, or self-sufficiency. You may occasionally meet with a person who seems a sort of compound of ignorance, stubbornness, and self-conceit; and who prides himself on being *a very independent character*. He has no respect for the opinions of others,

simply because he has not sense enough, or information enough, to know what those opinions are, or by what reasons they are supported. He "cares not what people think of him," because he is totally ignorant of the value of character. By independence of character I mean nothing of this sort. I mean that *conscientious and tenacious adherence to right, which leads a person to maintain his position, and pursue the even tenor of his way, despite all the banter, ridicule, or solicitation, that may be brought to induce him to a contrary course.* Now, undeniably, this is quite too rare a virtue; for while thousands are ready to boast of independence not one in ten of them possesses it. It is not natural to us, as you may perceive by the oft-repeated reply to an important suggestion: "*But will they not laugh at me*?"

Take the following illustration. It is from a clergyman, who was one of the actors in the scene described: –

"When I was a young man," said he, "I was a clerk in Boston. Two of my room-mates at my boarding-house were also clerks, about my own age, which was eighteen. The first Sunday morning, during the three or four long hours that elapsed from getting up to the bell-ringing for church, I felt a secret desire to get a Bible, which my mother had given me, out of my trunk, and read in it; for I had been so brought up by my parents, as to regard it as a duty at home, to read a chapter or two in the Bible every Sunday. I was now very anxious to get my Bible and read, but I was afraid to do so before my room-mates, who were reading some miscellaneous books. At length my conscience got the mastery, and I rose up and went to my trunk. I had half raised it, when the thought occurred to me that it might look like over-sanctity, and appear Pharisaical, – so I shut my trunk, and returned to the window. For twenty minutes I was miserably ill at ease: I felt I

was doing wrong. I started a second time for my trunk, and had my hand upon the little Bible, when the fear of being laughed at conquered the better emotion, and I again dropped the top of my trunk. As I turned away from it, one of my room-mates, who observed my irresolute movements, said, laughingly,

"'I -----, what's the matter? you seem as restless as a weather-cock.'

"I replied, by laughing in my turn; and then, conceiving the truth to be the best, frankly told them both what was the matter.

"To my surprise and delight, they both spoke, and averred that they had Bibles in their trunks, and had been secretly wishing to read in them, but were afraid to take them out, lest I should laugh at them.

"'Then,' said I, 'let us agree to read them every Sunday, and we shall have the laugh all on one side.'

"To this there was a hearty response, and the next moment the three Bibles were out; and I assure you we felt happier all that day for reading them that morning.

"The following Sunday, about ten o'clock, while we were each reading our chapters, two of our fellow-boarders from another room came in. When they saw how we were engaged, they stared, and then exclaimed, –

"'Bless us! what is all this? A conventicle?'

"In reply, I, smiling, related to them exactly how the matter stood: my struggle to get my Bible from my trunk; and how we three, having found we had all been afraid of each other without cause, had now agreed to read every Sunday.

"'Not a bad idea,' answered one of them. 'You have more courage than I have. I have a Bible, too, but have not looked into it since I have been in Boston!

but I'll read it after this, since you've broken the ice.'

"The other then asked one of us to read aloud, and both sat and quietly listened till the bell rang for church.

"That evening we three, in the same room, agreed to have a chapter read every night, by one or other of us, at nine o'clock, – and we religiously adhered to our purpose. A few evenings after this resolution, four or five of the boarders (for there were sixteen clerks boarding in the house) happened to be in our room talking when the nine o'clock bell rang. One of my room-mates, looking at me, opened the Bible. The others looking inquiringly, I then explained our custom.

"'We'll all stay and listen,' they said, almost unanimously.

"The result was that, without an exception, everyone of the sixteen clerks spent his Sabbath morning in reading the Bible; and the moral effect upon our

household was of the highest character. I relate this incident," concluded the clergyman, "to show that influence one person, even a youth, may exert for evil or good. No man should ever be afraid to do his duty. A hundred hearts may throb to act right, that only await a leader. I forgot to add that we were all called the 'Bible Clerks!' All these youths are now useful and Christian men, and more than one is labouring in the ministry."

The lesson I would impress upon you, my young friends, is, that real independence of character is an important safeguard against temptation; and though it is not natural to us, yet we may cultivate it, until a shower of taunts and jeers shall assail us in vain; and until scoffers themselves shall be tired of the sport, or even, following the dictates of their better judgment, shall become our allies in the very work from which they would once have diverted us.

Who can fail to perceive in the instance above narrated, that these young men had reached a crisis, not unlikely the very turning-point in their history; their reason urging them not to be ashamed of that Book, which, aside from its divine authority, is superior to all other books – that book which has raised nations from barbarism to liberty and happiness; and conscience urging them not to be ashamed of the religion of their fathers, and the Bible of their God; and yet reason and conscience nearly overpowered in the struggle against the fear of a jeer! a taunt! or a smile of contempt! One can but rejoice that conscience and a little common-sense, in this case, triumphed; while he feels indignant that poor fallen humanity should have descended so low, that not only in this, but a thousand instances, the Book of God, the revelation of heaven, should be weighed against *a jeer*, or even *the mere fear of a jeer*. It

forcibly illustrates the two truths already named: first, that real independence of character is far from being natural to us; and secondly, that we should *assiduously cultivate it*, taking our stand for correct principles, and maintain it at whatever cost.

5. The foregoing remarks naturally lead me to commend to you, as a further safeguard of youth, *the daily perusal of the Bible*. The Bible might with great propriety be denominated, "The Young Man's Own Book." It is not only superior to every other book, and more valuable than all others in the aggregate, but it is peculiar in its adaptation to the young, and in its regards for the young. For them it has special instructions, to them it holds out the most encouraging motives, and for them it contains special promises. The Book of Proverbs, for instance, points out all their peculiar dangers and safeguards. Other portions present striking examples of early piety, and the honour, safety, and happiness

resulting from it; such as the histories of Joseph, Josiah, the orphan Esther, and Timothy. In the New Testament, you behold the Son of God incarnate, passing through the various stages of childhood and youth; and illustrating "the beauty of holiness," by discharging the duties appropriate to each, in the most perfect and attractive manner. The parable of the prodigal son presents a most graphic delineation of the rash, ungrateful, disobedient youth, urged on by wild ambition, a corrupted imagination, and youthful lusts, forsaking the home of his childhood for the company of ungodly associates and licentious women, – until reduced to beggary and the occupation of a swine-herd, "he comes to himself," and returns a penitent to his father's house, where, in the compassionate tenderness of his reception, you behold a most lively and encouraging illustration of the mercy of God our heavenly Father. In the gradations

of reward in the last great day, you see how vastly different will be the condition of him who, serving God from his youth, has laid up an immensity of "treasure, where moth and rust do not corrupt," – who for many years served God and his generation, – from his who squandered the golden period of life in sin, and just escaped a death of horror and an eternity of misery by a late repentance.

Such, my young friends, is the Bible, – such are the motives it urges and the promises it holds out to guard you against temptation, and win you to a life of piety. Read it – read it daily – read it attentively – read it prayerfully – read it in the morning, before you allow your eye to fall on any other volume, or any other reading whatever; honour the God of the Bible, by making his book the companion of your choicest hours. Read it – not to cavil; not the find materials for disputation; not to wrest it from its proper design and true

import; not to see if you can find something to confirm you in a preconceived creed of indulgence and license; not to find a pretext for magnifying the mercy of God, at the expense of his *justice* and holiness; not to seek Christ merely as a *Deliverer*, while you reject him as a *King*; not to encourage yourselves in impenitence, but to find motives for "brokenness of heart, and contrition of spirit." Read it, as though it came direct from God *to you*, with your name inscribed upon it; read, believe, and obey it; for by it shall you be judged in the last day. Well, indeed, has it been said: –

"Within this awful volume lies,
The mystery of mysteries!
O, happiest he of human race,
To whom our God has given grace,
To read, to hear, to fear, to pray,
To lift the latch, and force the way:
But better had he ne'er been born,
Who reads to doubt, or reads to scorn."

These lines have been ascribed to Sir Walter Scott, a man whose fascinating genius might have been far better employed than it was. To what book he turned for consolation, when he returned a trembling invalid from Italy to die in his native land, may be learned from the following incident: –

Addressing his son-in-law, he said, "Bring me a book." "What book?" said Lockhart. "Can you ask?" said the expiring genius, whose tomes of novels, however, they may amuse the hours of thoughtlessness and gayety, have no balm for death, – "Can you ask what book? – there is *but one*!"

No! there is but one book that can cheer in sickness, and comfort in death; there is but one book that conveys infallible instruction in *all* necessary truth, – a safeguard in danger, a guide in difficulty, the young man's directory, the old man's companion and comforter; the instructor of

our ignorance, the corrector of our vices, – that unveils the future, unfolds the divine government, and teaches the way to heaven. There is but one such book; and that young man who cleaves to it, we consider immeasurably more safe, more likely to secure an honourable and useful position in society, more likely to live holy, and die happy for so doing; while the young man who has taken leave of his Bible is already on the high road to ruin – nay, is already more than half ruined.

6. *Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy.* Here, my young friends, I enter upon a subject so important in its nature, so manifold in its interests, so far-reaching in its results, that a volume seems necessary, rather than a few brief remarks. On the observance or neglect of this one precept, *hare already turned to the destinies of unnumbered thousands*, and so will it ever be.

The benevolent Charles S. Dudley stated, that he had, at different times visited one hundred and forty-one individuals under sentence of death, all of whom agreed that their first crime was Sabbath-breaking. Amongst others, he visited a poor man, sixty-four years of age, at Oxford Castle. Mr. D. asked him what had been his first temptation. His answer was, "Breaking the Sabbath-day; first rambling in the fields, then gambling, then drinking."

Individuals and communities seem, by a sort of moral necessity, to collect their virtues or their vices into this one point. He who remembers the Sabbath-day to keep it holy, is generally a virtuous man. The community that faithfully observe the Sabbath, is uniformly a community where law is respected, liberty is enjoyed, life and property are safe, and morals are pure. There is a public conscience, and an elevated public sentiment; private virtues shine out in all their loveliness;

benevolence is abroad on her errands of mercy; and "whatsoever things are true, pure, honest, lovely, and of good report," abound.

Directly the reverse is it with an individual, a family, or a community, which has no Sabbath. The Sabbath-breaker is not to be trusted; he is generally a vicious character. His moral tone is low, his perceptions of right and wrong are beclouded, his conscience does not govern, temptation finds but a feeble resistance, abandoning the virtuous, who keep the Sabbath, he is borne along with the low, the unprincipled, and the vicious, until he adds to the number – already numberless – who sadly illustrate the precept: "A companion of fools shall be destroyed." So it is with a family of Sabbath-breakers. Scarcely will you find such a family prosperous or happy. They are not united, harmonious, and kind among themselves. They do not turn out well. They are not good citizens,

or good neighbours; they neither live well nor die well. And so is it with a community. A village without a Sabbath is a village without order, peace, or virtue. Drunkenness, gambling, profanity, and litigation prevail. Real estate is scarcely worth half price. Crime and taxes abound. The arm of the law is feeble; the strong bear down the weak; education is neglected; magistrates are corrupt; and the place becomes a sort of Sodom, from which the good escape, as fast as they can dispose of their property, and get away.

The far-reaching wisdom and paternal kindness of our Creator, are eminently displayed in the institution of the Sabbath. It was "made for man," – God's second institution in Paradise, solemnly re-enacted on Sinai, confirmed and sanctioned by the Saviour and his apostles, and made of universal and perpetual obligation.

It is a grand social institution. On the Sabbath the rich and the poor meet

together; arbitrary distinctions, arising from birth or fortune, are laid aside; all assemble in one house to listen to the same truths, to appear before him who is the Maker of all, – with whom all distinctions, except those of character, are valueless, – who has sent his Son to redeem the peasant no less than the prince; and who opens to all the glories of the eternal world, on precisely the same terms. Here the hearts of the good are knit together in love; here they feel that they are brethren, born of one blood, redeemed by the same Saviour, renewed by the same Spirit, adopted into the same family, and journeying to the same country.

The Sabbath is a grand republican institution. A republic without a Sabbath is an impossibility. We build upon the intelligence and virtue of the people. "Our means of safety are as peculiar as our perils. We have parted with many of the prescriptive safeguards of other countries. The popular ignorance upon which the

monarchies of the Old World have so greatly relied for safety, we deprecate as our danger; the elevation of the masses in intelligence, which they fear, is our hope. They are building citadels of defence from their own people; we are seeking to awaken in ours a higher and higher estimate of their power and their rights. Their restraints from violence are external force; ours are the love of order, the sense of justice, the power of conscience, and the fear of God. Such are our trusts. If they fail us, all is lost. Our mistake is fatal, and there is no remedy."

Now the Sabbath has more influence in promoting "the love of order, the sense of justice, the power of conscience, and the fear of God," than all the prisons, and penalties, and armies of police, combined. "A Sabbath-keeping people will be an obedient people. The manner in which they keep the Sabbath will be found a test of their character, an index to their morality.

They who regularly observe the Sabbath, will observe the law. They will not commit theft or robbery who regularly attend public worship, which is a part of their proper observance of that day." There may be here and there an exception; but the fact that they are exceptions, only serves to confirm the rule. The lawless and disobedient are the Sabbath-breakers, and not the Sabbath-keepers.

In a certain village of the far West was an atheist. He was a great admirer of Robert Dale Owen and Fanny Wright; but he could see no beauty in the Sun of Righteousness. This man, of course, never entered any place of worship. Indeed, in the fruit season, he was specially busy on the Sabbath, in defending his orchards from his great enemies, the wood-pecker, and the idle, profligate persons of the village, who on that day usually made sad havoc among his apples and peaches.

One day, while at work with his son-in-law – an atheist like himself, although a more kind and courteous gentleman – as a pastor of a congregation was passing, he very rudely thus accosted the minister: –

"Sir, what is the use of your preaching? What good do you by it? Why don't you teach these fellows better morals? Why don't you tell them something about stealing in your sermons, and keep them from robbing my orchard?"

To this the minister pleasantly replied: "My dear sir, I am sorry that you are so annoyed, and I would most willingly read the fellows who rob your orchard a lecture on thieving; but the truth is, they are so much like you and the major here that I never get a chance."

"Good, good!" replied the major, laughing; on which the elder atheist, blushing a little, and, in an apologetical tone, said: –

"Well, well, I believe it is true enough, – it is not the church-going people who steal my apples!"

Nicholas Biddle, Esq., late president of the Bank of the United States, once dismissed a clerk, because the latter refused to write for him, on the Sabbath. The young man, with a mother dependent on his exertions, was thus thrown out of employment by what some would call an over-nice scruple of conscience. But a few days after, Mr. Biddle being requested to nominate a cashier for another bank, recommended this very individual, and mentioned this incident as a test of his trustworthiness. "You can trust him," said he, "he wouldn't work for me on Sunday."

He who breaks the Sabbath, my friends, or tempts others to break it, is not a good citizen; he is, whether intentionally or otherwise, an enemy to his country, a subverter of its institutions; and could he succeed in making all others like himself,

the liberties of the nation would be destroyed.

The Sabbath is the great and all-pervading means of giving efficacy to moral government, and holds a relation to general morality similar to that which the marriage institution holds to social purity. It was designed, and is adapted to lead people steadily to rest from worldly business, cares, and amusements; to contemplate Jehovah as the Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, Benefactor, Owner, Governor, Judge, and Disposer of men; to keep alive, and render practically efficacious, the knowledge of the one only living and true God; to lead all to worship and adore him, and thus to experience the benefits of his infinitely wise, universal and benevolent reign.

Hence the reason which he gave to his ancient people why they should keep it – "that ye may know that I am Jehovah." Had all men properly kept the Sabbath, all

would have known Jehovah, and worshipped him from the creation of the world to the present time, and idolatry never would have been practised on the earth. Hence also, when the wants of his ancient people required that they should no longer depend upon oral communications merely, but should have the unchanging laws by which they were to be governed placed upon a permanent record – such as, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me; shalt not bow down to graven images; shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; shalt honour thy father and thy mother; shalt not kill, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness, or covet," – he put this among them: "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates." He placed this in the midst of them; and

obedience to it was essential, in order to obedience to the other commands. If they would not keep the Sabbath, they would not obey him in other things. Sabbath-breaking would be treason against the government of God, and open the way for universal profligacy and ruin.

The Sabbath was designed to make all men feel this; and to lead them, by keeping it, publicly to acknowledge, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest." And "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Jehovah, and thou are exalted as head above all."

Such are some of the truths which, by the keeping of the Sabbath, are every week proclaimed to the world, in a manner adapted to the nature of man, and suited to

make on him a strong and lasting impression.

When, on the morning of that blessed day, the sun rises and shines as brightly as on other days, the oxen graze as peacefully, the lambs skip as briskly, and birds sing as sweetly – yet no man goes forth to his labour, no shop-door or window opens, no wheel rattles on the pavement, or vessel leaves the harbour, no stage-coach or canal-boat runs, no whistling or rumbling is heard on the railroad, or bustle is witnessed in any department of secular business, but universal stillness reigns throughout creation, except as broken by the voice of prayer and praise ascending to its Author – *that stillness is the voice of God to the moral nature of man*; his still, small, but all-pervading and efficacious voice, proclaiming his existence, his character, and his will; that he is a great God, and a great King above all gods; that in his hand are the deep places of the earth, and that the

strength of the hills is his also; that the sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land; that he is a God that judgeth in the earth, and is not far from every one of us; that on him we are dependent, and to him are accountable; and that he will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil. And it is a voice which each individual who is enlightened, and not scathed by iniquity till he is twice dead, will hear, and in some measure feel.

In proportion as he hearkens to it, and enters into its spirit, he will have a deeper and more operative conviction of the presence of God, and of the nearness, reality, and importance of eternal things. He will feel more solemn, more as if one thing were needful; as if the favour of God were life and his loving-kindness better than life; and he will be more likely to say, "O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he

is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand."

This was designed to be the effect of the stillness of the Sabbath, and this is the preparation which men need when they go to the house of God, and hear his voice speaking through the living ministry to the ear, in order to make it like the rain and the snow that come down from heaven and water the earth, causing it to bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater. So, when men rightly keep the Sabbath, will the word of the Lord be. It will not return void, but will accomplish that which pleases him, and prosper in the thing whereunto he sends it. In the prophetic language of inspiration, "Men will go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills will break forth before them into singing, and all the trees of the fields will clap their hands. Instead of the thorn will come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier, the

myrtle-tree; and it will be to the Lord for a name, and for an everlasting sign, that shall not be cut off."

The Sabbath is emphatically the young man's day. It gives him one day in seven to rest from the labours of the desk, the workshop, or the recitation-room; it enables him to lay aside his secular employments, and, repairing with the virtuous and devout to the house of Christian instruction, to turn his thoughts into a new channel, and engage in contemplating the great and elevating truths of our holy religion. It thus exerts a most beneficial influence on his body and mind. If there were no Sabbath, he would be compelled to work *three hundred and sixty-five days in the year*, overtasking both his physical and mental energies. The body would fail much sooner; cases of mental inbecility and insanity would greatly multiply; the moral feelings would be deprived of the *fifty-two days in the year*,

which the moral Governor of the world has designed for their culture and improvement; and the whole man would feel the blighting effects and such a privation. Illustrations of the beneficial tendencies of the Sabbath, and the evils resulting from its desecration, might be multiplied to an almost unlimited extent. I present you with the following: –

"In the year 1793," says Grant Thorburn," when Louis XVI. was beheaded, and the French Revolution was in full blast, I was a thorough-going radical. With seventeen more of our club, I was marched, under a guard of the king's officers, and lodged in Edinburgh jail. After a summary hearing, I got liberty to banish myself, and accordingly took passage in the good ship Providence, – and landed at New-York in June, 1794. I was then in my twenty-second year. When the ship cast off from the wharf, in Scotland, and swung round with the breeze, my father stood upon the shore. He waved a last

adieu, and exclaimed, 'Remember the Sabbath-day.' I arrived in New-York on a Saturday, – and the next day being the Sabbath, at nine o'clock in the morning three young men of our company called at my lodgings.

"'Where are you going to-day?' they inquired.

"'To the church,' I replied.

"'We have been ten weeks at sea; our health requires exercise. Let us walk out to-day, and go to church next Sabbath,' they replied.

"'Said I, you can go where you please, but I'll go to church; the last words I heard from my father were, "Remember the Sabbath-day;" and, had I no respect for the fourth commandment, I have not yet forgotten his last advice.'

"They went to the fields, and I went to the church; they spent forty or fifty cents in the tavern, and I put one penny on the plate at the morning, afternoon, and night

service – total three pence. They continued going into the country, – and in process of time the landlady's daughter and the landlady's niece would join their company. Then each couple hired a gig, at two dollars a day; wine, cake, and ice-cream on the road, fifty cents each; dine at Jamaica, one dollar each. They got home at eight o'clock in the evening, half drunk, – and having been caught in a thunder-shower, their coats, hats, and mantles were damaged fifty per cent. They rose the next morning at nine o'clock, with sore heads, sore hearts, muddy boots, and an angry conscience, – besides being twelve dollars lighter than when they started. I went to church, rose at five o'clock in the morning – head sound, heart light, bones refreshed, conscience quiet – and commenced the labours of the week in peace and plenty. They were all mechanics; some of them could earn twelve dollars a week. My business, that of a wrought-nail maker, was

poor; the cut-nail machines had just got into operation, which cut down my wages to a shaving. With close application, I could only earn five dollars and fifty cents per week. Never mind! at the end of the year, my Sabbath-riding shipmates had fine coats, fine hats, powdered heads, and ruffled shirts; but I had one hundred dollars piled in the corner of my chest. Having lived fast, they died early. Nearly forty winters are past, and forty summers ended sine the last was laid in the Potter's, or some other field, while I – having received from my Maker a good constitution, and common-sense to take care of it – am as sound in mind, body, and spirit, as I was on this day fifty-six years ago, when first I set my foot on shore at Governor's wharf, New-York. Besides, it's a fact, (for which my family can vouch,) I have been only one day confined to the house, by sickness, during all that period."

Of one hundred* men admitted to the Massachusetts State Prison in one year, eighty-nine had lived in habitual violation of the Sabbath, and neglect of public worship.

A gentleman in England, who was in the habit, for more than twenty years, of daily visiting convicts, states that, almost universally, when brought to a sense of their condition, they lamented their neglect of the Sabbath, and pointed to their violation of it as a principal cause of their ruin. That prepared them for, and led them on, step by step, to the commission of other crimes, and finally to the commission of that which brought them to the prison, and in many cases to the gallows. He has letters almost innumerable, he says, from others, proving the same thing, and that

*See Sabbath Manual, published by the American Tract Society, a highly interesting and instructive volume, which should be in the hands of every young man in the nation. From this volume several of these remarks are taken.

they considered the violation of the Sabbath the great cause of their ruin. He has attended three hundred and fifty at the place of execution, when they were put to death for their crimes; and nine out of ten who were brought to a sense of their condition, attributed the greater part of their departure from God to their neglect of the Sabbath.

Another gentleman, who has been conversant with prisoners for more than thirty years, states that he found in all his experience, both with regard to those who had been capitally convicted and those who had not, that they referred to the violation of the Sabbath as the chief cause of their crimes; and that this has been confirmed by all the opportunities he has had of examining prisoners. Not that this has been the only cause of crime; but, like the use of intoxicating liquors, it has greatly increased public and private immorality, and been the

means, in a multitude of cases, of premature death.

Another gentleman, who has had the charge of more than one hundred thousand prisoners, and has taken special pains to ascertain the causes of their crimes, says that he does not recollect a single case of capital offence where the party had not been a Sabbath-breaker; and in many cases they assured him that Sabbath-breaking was the first step in their downward course. Indeed, he says, with reference to prisoners of all classes, nineteen out of twenty have neglected the Sabbath, and other ordinances of religion; and he has often met with prisoners about to expiate their crimes by an ignominious death, who earnestly enforced upon survivors the necessity of an observance of the Sabbath, and ascribed their own course of iniquity to a non-observance of that day.

Says the keeper of one of the largest prisons, – "Nine-tenths of our inmates are

those who did not value the Sabbath, and were not in the habit of attending public worship."

The secretary of a Prison-discipline Society, who has long been extensively conversant with prisoners, was asked how many person he supposed there are in State prisons who observed the Sabbath, and habitually attended public worship, up to the time when they committed the crime for which they were imprisoned. He answered, "I do not suppose there are any." An inquiry into the facts, it is believed, would show, with but few exceptions, this opinion to be correct. Men who keep the Sabbath experience the restraining, if not the renewing and sanctifying grace of God. While they keep the Sabbath, God keeps them. When they reject the Sabbath, he rejects them; and thus suffers them to eat the fruit of their own way, and to be filled with their own devices.

A father, whose son was addicted to riding out for pleasure on the Sabbath, was told that if he did not stop it his son would be ruined. He did not stop it, but sometimes set the example of riding out for pleasure himself. His son became a man, was placed in a responsible situation, and intrusted with a large amount of property. Soon he was a defaulter, and absconded. In a different part of the country he obtained another responsible situation, and was again intrusted with a large amount of property. Of that he defrauded the owner, and fled again. He was apprehended, tried, convicted, and sent to the State prison. After years spent in solitude and labour, he wrote a letter to his father, and, after recounting his course of crime, added, -- "that was the effect of breaking the Sabbath when I was a boy."

Should every convict who broke the Sabbath when a boy, and whose father set him the example, speak out from all the

State prisons of the country, they would tell a story which would cause the ears of every one that should hear it to tingle.

A distinguished merchant, long accustomed to extensive observation and experience, and who had gained an uncommon knowledge of men, said: "When I see one of my apprentices or clerks riding out on the Sabbath, on Monday I dismiss him. Such a one cannot be trusted."

Facts echo the declaration -- "Such a one cannot be trusted." He is naturally no worse than others; but he casts off fear, lays himself open to the assaults of the adversary, and rejects the means of Divine protection. He ventures unarmed into the camp of the enemy, and is made a demonstration to the world of the great truth, that "he that trusteth to his own heart is a fool." Not a man in Christendom, whatever his character or standing, can knowingly and presumptuously trample on

the Sabbath, devoting it to worldly business, travelling, pleasure, or amusement, and not debase his character, increase his wickedness, and augment the danger that he will be abandoned of God, and given up to final impenitence and ruin.

A distinguished merchant in a large city, said to the writer: "It is about thirty years since I came to this city; and every man through this whole range, who came down to his store, or suffered his counting-room to be opened on the Sabbath, has lost his property. There is no need of breaking the Sabbath, and no benefit from it. We have not had a vessel leave the harbour on the Sabbath for more than twenty years. It is altogether better to get them off on a week day than on the Sabbath." It is better even for this world. And so with all kinds of secular business. Men may seem to gain for a time by the profanation of the Sabbath; but it does not end well. Their

disappointment, even here, often comes suddenly.

The writer of this, in a late journey, passed near the houses of four men who started together for the Far West. On Sabbath morning they discussed the question, whether it was right and best for them to travel on the Lord's day. The result was, three of them went onward, and reached the city of Buffalo in time to take the steamboat Erie, on her last voyage. On that same Sabbath morning, a company of travellers, in another place, discussed the same question with regard to the propriety of their travelling on that day; and they separated one from another. A part went on their journey, and a part stopped and attended public worship. Those who went on arrived in time to take the same boat; but they had not proceeded far when it took fire, and was soon in a blaze. Some were consumed; others jumped overboard, and were drowned. "Never," said a man who

went out to their assistance -- "never shall I forget the sound that struck upon my ear, when I first came within hearing of that boat. They were hanging on the sides, and the burning cinders were pouring down on their heads, and they were dropping off, and dropping off. O, it was like the wailing of despair."

Take another illustration: --

A young man, the son of pious parents, had been most regular in his attendance upon the ministry of the Rev. Baptist W. Noel. "All of a sudden, he contracted an acquaintance with some young men of infidel principles, or who at least were scoffers at religion. He imbibed their views; and the result was, that he entirely absented himself from the house of God. But this was not the only effect of his newly adopted principles; he forthwith commenced a career of unrestrained dissipation, and of criminal indulgence of every kind. This, as so generally turns out

to be the case, laid in a few weeks the foundation of a fatal illness. He only lived three months after he had forsaken the sanctuary, though he was at that time in the enjoyment of perfect health. When all hopes of recovery had vanished, and his friends anticipated his immediate dissolution, Mr. Noel was called to visit him. At first, and for some time, the dying young man refused to even speak to Mr. Noel, but wrapped his head up in the bed-clothes. After several ineffectual attempts to induce the unhappy youth to enter into conversation about that Being before whose tribunal he was about to appear, and that eternity on whose verge he was standing, Mr. Noel offered up a prayer for him, and was about to leave the room. Just as he had his hand on the latch of the door, the unhappy young man made an effort to sit partially up in his bed, and asked his former pastor to stay a moment. Mr. Noel returned to the bedside of the dying youth, -- on

which, as if making an effort beyond his physical strength, he inclined his head towards the ear of Mr. Noel, and whispered in accents of so sepulchral a character, that they must have saddened if not appalled the stoutest heart -- 'I am damned!' The moment he uttered the awful words, he dropped down in his bed, -- and again enveloping his head and face in the blankets, refused, to utter another syllable. He died in a few hours, in a state of utter despair."

And here I would add a word, on *the manner of spending the Sabbath*. Most obviously, the Sabbath is designed as a day for getting and doing good; for public and private devotion; and for works of benevolence and mercy. It is not a day for mere intellectual improvement, -- for studying science or politics, for cultivating taste, or for seeking mere gratification. It is a day for cultivating the *conscience* and the *affections*; for making the heart holy, and

the life useful. Now these ends may be almost or quite defeated, -- and too often, in fact, are, -- by not a few really well-disposed young persons. They become a sort of *mental epicures*, and seek chiefly *entertainment* on the Sabbath. Instead of choosing a ministry for edification, they choose one that affords them the greatest amount of mental excitement. Oratory and polished periods become more important in their estimation than the gospel of Christ. The man who comes to them "with the enticing words of man's wisdom," is preferred to him who has, with Paul, resolved "to know nothing" among his people "but Christ and him crucified." They go to church, much as others go to the theatre -- to be amused. An intellectual discourse, a pleasing voice, brilliant tropes, the inculcation of good morals, with an occasional well-turned compliment to the hearer, and the careful avoidance of anything that would make him dissatisfied

with himself, constitute, in their estimation, fine preaching. And thus, insensibly, are they led away from the very first principles of gospel truth; their Sabbaths are lost, their consciences are hushed to sleep by the pleasing opiate, miscalled a gospel sermon, never, perhaps, to awake, until they find themselves impenitent and unrenewed sinners standing for sentence at the bar of their Judge.

And yet again, there are others who pursue a course, I will not say equally fatal, but yet fraught with danger. They do not allow themselves to sit under heterodox preaching, it is true; they are guarded, and their principles are fixed on this point; but they cultivate roving and vagrant habits, wandering from church to church -- no one in particular is their home. They are in no Sabbath school as teachers, in no Bible-class as learners; they cultivate acquaintance with no particular minister, and interest themselves in the prosperity of

no particular congregation. They are like a student who should roam from one school or college to another, spending a week in one, and month in the next, until he had gone the rounds of all; and they come out as little profited in religion, as such a student would in education. If all were to pursue the same course, there could be neither churches nor pastors, Sabbath schools nor revivals. Truth could never be brought to bear upon the mind *consecutively*. No course of *systematic* instruction could be pursued. The minds of such persons resemble the lumber-room of some old baronial castle, which has been the receptacle for disjointed furniture, odds and ends, shreds and patches, from time immemorial. In this church they hear *one* of *a course* of sermons on the decalogue; in the next, *one* of a *series* on the patriarchs; in the third, *one* of *ten* on the incarnation; and in the fourth, *half* of a discourse, the remainder of which was to be given in the

evening. Not wishing to constitute myself your censor, but being in reality your friend, I must warn you, dear youth, against these dangers. Choose for your church one where the gospel is preached -- preached earnestly and affectionately. Where these *prime truths* are specially insisted upon -- *that man is an undone sinner, and Christ an all-sufficient Saviour; that repentance is our immediate duty, and salvation our present privilege.* What has a perishing sinner to do with anything else? "Faith," says Cecil, "is the master-spring of a minister -- Hell is before me, and thousands of souls shut up there in everlasting agonies -- Jesus Christ stands forth to save men from rushing into this bottomless abyss -- he sends me to proclaim his ability and his love. I want no fourth idea! -- every fourth idea is contemptible! --every fourth idea is a grand impertinence!"

7. *Seek, by daily and earnest prayer, the guidance and protection of your Father in heaven.*

God is "*the hearer of prayer.*" "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer." "Ask," says he, "and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened." What could be more encouraging? That the "high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity;" the great and glorious Jehovah, "whose understanding is infinite," whose power is omnipotent, who upholds all worlds, and pours the tide of life through illimitable space, and whose government extends over unnumbered suns and systems, -- that he should listen to the prayer of the destitute, and that his ear should be attentive to the gentle plaint of the bereaved widow, the cry of the lonely

orphan, the sighing of the prisoner, or the young man, who "cries unto him, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth," is, indeed, condescension the most wonderful, and a truth the most encouraging. Who would suppose this could be any other than a praying world? Who would imagine that any one would neglect a privilege so great and precious?

"Just fancy that in our earth's yearly journey round the sun, there was disclosed a crevice in the sky; that on one night in the year, and on one mountain-top, there was a vista opened through the encircling vault, and a sight of dazzling glories revealed to all who gazed from the favoured summit, -- and fancy that through the brilliant gap there fell a shower of gold and gems, -- and that this recurred regularly on the self-same evening every year, -- what a concourse to that Pisgah might you count upon! How many eager eyes would strain the breathless hour beforehand, till the first streak of

radiance betokened the bursting glory; and how many emulous hands rush together to catch the flaming rubies, and the diamond rain!" And yet, what would be the value of "the flaming rubies and diamond rain," compared with those blessings which may descend on any hill or mountain, into any grove or vineyard, beside any gushing spring, or in any secluded chamber which we choose to make our oratory -- our place of prayer? What are sparkling gems to that guiding and guarding Providence into whose hands we may daily commit ourselves in prayer? What are they, compared with a cloudless sky and a serene spirit? O! what are all the riches of earth, compared with the blessings we may every day receive at the throne of mercy?

"We may ask God's blessing on little things as well as great. There is nothing which it is right for us to do, but it is also right to ask that God would bless it. There is nothing so little, but the frown of God

can convert it into a sad calamity, of his smile exalt it into a most memorable mercy; and there is nothing we can do, but its complexion for weal or woe depends entirely upon what the Lord will make of it. It is said of Matthew Henry, that no journey was undertaken, no subject or course of study entered upon, no book committed to the press, nor any trouble apprehended or felt, without a particular application to the mercy-seat for direction, assistance, and success. The late Bishop Heber, on each new incident of his history, or on the eve of any undertaking, used to compose a brief Latin prayer. After he had gained the prize for his beautiful poem, 'Palestine,' -- after it had been read in the ears of applauding Oxford, -- the successful scholar could nowhere be found, till some one discovered him on his knees, giving thanks to Him who had given him the power to produce that poem, -- and who had spared his parents to witness and share his joy. It was

to prayer that Henry IV. of France ascribed his crown, and Gustavus of Sweden owed his victories. The father of the modern fine arts was wont, before he began any new composition, to invoke his aid, who in other days taught Aholiab; and the Goliath of English literature felt that he studied successfully when he prayed earnestly: and what Michael Angelo, and Milton, and Johnson found so hopeful to their mighty genius, cannot hinder us." Howard and Washington were men of prayer. "The life of Francke exhibits many signal answers to prayer. His orphan house was literally built up and sustained by answers to prayer. A pious slave in Newport, Rhode Island, was allowed by his master to labour for his own profit, whatever time he could gain by extra diligence. He laid up all he could earn in this way, for the purpose of purchasing the freedom of himself and family; but when some of his Christian friends heard of his situation, they advised him to resort to

prayer. Accordingly the next day he gained, he set it apart for fasting and prayer; but before the close of the day, his master, who knew nothing of the manner in which he was employed, sent for him, and gave him a written certificate of his freedom. This slave, whose name was Newport Gardiner, was a man of good character, and ardent piety; and in 1825 he was ordained deacon of a church of coloured people who sailed from Boston for Liberia."

These are a few amid illustrations innumerable, that God is indeed "the hearer of prayer." Avail yourselves, my young friends, of this privilege, cherish an habitual sense of your dependence, and breathe forth daily that prayer which is the language of dependence, into the ear of mercy. Never allow yourself to be shamed out of your confidence in God. Let no banter or jeers from brainless scoffers, or sophistry from profane witlings, induce you

to abandon your prayers. Remember that God's eye follows you from your secret chamber; and if you rush from your prayerless waking into the business of the day, no marvel if Providence abandon you, if your temper is chafed, your business entangled, or your life endangered. "Though," says Sir Matthew Hale, "the secret direction of Almighty God is principally seen in matters relating to the good of the soul, -- yet, in the great and momentous concerns of this life, a good man, fearing God, and begging his direction, will very often, if not at all times, find it. I can call my own experience to witness, that even in the external actions, occurrences, and incidents of my whole life, I have never been disappointed of the best directions, when I have in humility, and a sense of my own deficiency, implored it."

LECTURE VI.

POSITION AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUNG MEN.

"For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption." -- Acts 13:36.

The *life* of David is full of interest. In early life we behold the ruddy shepherd boy, leading his father's flocks amid the green pastures, and beside the running brooks which surround Bethlehem. Suddenly he appears transformed into the victorious warrior, whose triumphs the fair daughters of Israel celebrate, "with singing, with joy, with tabrets and instruments of music." Now, again, we behold him an outcast, the object of kingly jealousy, and hunted from tribe to tribe, "like a partridge upon the mountains." Finally we see him the great

monarch, the unrivalled poet, the inspired seer, the devout worshipper, – eclipsed for a moment by a sad fall, but rising again, -- his sun at length sets in glory; and the pen of inspiration portrays his deeds, and his exit. "He served his own generation by the will of God, and fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers."

My object in selecting this fine passage, is to make it the foundation of some remarks ON THE POSITION AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUNG MEN.

That the interests of society are concentrated in her young people, particularly her young men, is obvious to all reflecting persons. "When Catiline attempted to overthrow the liberties of Rome, he began by corrupting the young men of the city, -- and forming them for deeds of daring and crime. In this he acted with keen discernment of what constitutes the strength and safety of a community -- *the virtue and intelligence of its youth,*

especially of its young men. This class of persons has, with much propriety, been denominated the flower of a country, -- the rising hope of the Church and society Whilst *they* are preserved uncorrupted, and come forward, with enlightened minds and good morals, to act their respective parts on the stage of life, the foundations of social order and happiness are secure, -- and no weapon formed against the safety of the community can prosper. This is indeed a truth so obvious, that all wise and benevolent men -- whether statesmen, philanthropists, or ministers of religion -- have always felt a deep and peculiar interest in this class of society. How entirely this accords with the spirit of inspiration it is needless to remark. Hardly any one trait of the Bible is more prominent, than its benevolent concern for the youthful generations of men. On them its instructions drop as the rain, and distil as the dew; around their path it pours its

purest light and sweetest promises; and by every motive of kindness and entreaty, invitation and warning, it aims to form them for duty and happiness, for holiness and heaven." -- *Hawes's Lectures to Young Men.*

1. *You live, my young friends, in an auspicious age.*

The treasures which are laid at the feet of this generation have cost much and are invaluable; they are the slow accumulations of ages of toil and suffering. The man of science consumed not merely the midnight oil, but literally consumed himself, in those laborious and wasting studies, by the aid of which civilization has risen to her present position. The man of inventive genius did the same, -- while the man of piety cheerfully shed his blood that conscience might be free.

The lessons history is designed to teach, are too often entirely overlooked. The moving panorama presents an ever-

shifting scene, in which those plagues of the world, called heroes, are ever prominent. The marshalled hosts, the fields of carnage, the conflagrations of cities and desolation of provinces, the intrigues of cabinets and profligacy of courts, the pomp and glitter of royalty, attract the eye and impress the imagination, while the *real interests* of society are forgotten. Yet down, far beneath the glittering pageant, there were elements at work, scarcely noticed, but deep, profound, and, in their results, far-reaching and momentous. Galileo is at work in his study; Wiclif is translating the Bible; Luther is slowly and painfully working out the problem, "How can a man be just with his Maker?" Huss is suffering in his dungeon, at Constance; Jerome is pleading the cause of humanity before the princes and ecclesiastics of assembled Europe; the Waldenses are pouring forth their blood like water; the martyrs of Lyons, and Paris, and

Smithfield, are giving their bodies to the scaffold and the flames; the Pilgrims are braving the tempests of the Atlantic in the little Mayflower, and lying down amid the famine and snows of a New-England winter, in coffins rude, and graves unmarked; Howard is diving into the depths of dungeons, and the infection of hospitals; Wesley and Whitefield are braving the mobs of an ignorant and brutalized society, whom tithe-fed parsons have left to the reforming agencies of the cock-pit and the prize-ring; everywhere the agencies are at work -- everywhere the struggle is going on. And these are but the *continuation* of a conflict, commenced long, long ago. Patriarchs and prophets began it; the award they received was long since recorded: "Cruel mockings and scourgings, bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being

destitute, afflicted, tormented. They wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." More than this: even "He who came as a man's great model and great deliverer, was seized as an impostor, and crucified as a malefactor."

History is crimsoned -- it flows down a tide of blood. The altars of tyranny have been ever smoking; the priests of violence have ministered at those altars day and night. The sighing of the prisoners has never ceased. Even at this day Rome has her inquisition, and hurls her anathemas at freedom and the Bible.

Now, my young friends, there is a lesson here; history has her surface of movement and counter-movement, of plot and counter-plot. She presents the spectacle of the prancing war-horse and the nodding plume, the pageant of courts and royalty; but she has her deep under-current of instruction. If "the lines have now fallen to us in pleasant places, and if we have now

a goodly heritage," we are to remember it was not always so. When I see Jeremiah in his loathsome dungeon, or Daniel thrust into the den of lions, or Paul incarcerated at Philippi, I am not to forget that I have a personal interest *in the conflict of principle with power* in which they engaged. Huss and Jerome suffered in a far-off land, which I never saw, and in an age which dates back generations before I was born; but every word of their eloquent pleadings, and every act of their far more eloquent sufferings, was for me. They fought for truth and conscience; and I have as deep an interest in truth and conscience as they had. It is thus I would read history. We should visit the fires of Smithfield, and the dungeons of the Inquisition, not as *spectators*, but as *brothers*. We should look upon the reformers and martyrs, the Pilgrims and the Huguenots, as fighting not their own battle merely, but ours also. And when we sit down to read a free Bible, or

assemble at the family altar, or go unmolested to the house of God, we should remember the time was when preaching the gospel was a crime; possessing the Bible was a crime; reading it to one's own family was the road to the dungeon; and assembling for prayer must be at midnight, and in the depths of wilds and forests. Such is a faint outline of the picture of former times, and *such the price of the privileges we enjoy.*

2. *You live in a favoured country.*

In this respect, our advantages are unrivalled. We have a domain of vast extent, washed by two oceans, indented with bays and harbours, and abounding with vegetable and mineral resources. It is visited by no famines, rocked by no earthquakes, scourged by no armies of locusts, and swept by no burning sirocco. But these, however essential to the development of national greatness, are not its chief advantages. It is a country where

struggling freedom has at length found a home, and the oppressed of every land find an asylum, -- where the people are burdened by no standing armies, and groan under the burden of no national debt* -- a country in

*The following familiar passage from the facetious Sidney Smith contains truth which many a struggling Englishman finds to be quite too serious for a joke: --

"We can inform Jonathan what are the inevitable consequences of being too fond of glory -- taxes upon every article that enters into the mouth, or covers the back, or is placed under the foot -- taxes upon everything which is pleasant to see, hear, feel, smell, or taste -- taxes upon warmth, light, and locomotion -- taxes on everything on earth, and the waters under the earth -- on everything that comes from abroad, or is grown at home -- taxes on the raw material -- taxes on every fresh value that is added to it by the industry of man -- taxes on the cause which pampers man's appetite, and the drug that restores him to health -- on the ermine which decorates the judge, and the rope which hangs the criminal -- on the poor man's salt, and the rich man's spice -- on the brass-nails of the coffin, and the ribbons of the bride -- at bed or board, couchant or levant, we mut pay. The school-boy whips his taxed top; the beardless youth manages his taxed horse, with a taxed bridle, on a taxed road; and the dying Englishman pours his

"The *leading* design of Providence in reference to this country was, no doubt, a RELIGIOUS one. It is known that the first discoverers of this continent were Romanists. America was taken possession of by Papal governments." Nothing seemed more probable at one time, than that the whole country would have languished under that system of tyranny which crushes both body and mind.

France had taken early possession of the Canadas, and also seized the mouths of the Mississippi. Her train of forts extended from the lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. Her

medicine, which has paid seven per cent., into a spoon that has paid fifteen per cent., flings himself back upon his chintz bed, which has paid twenty-two per cent., expires in the arms of his apothecary, who has paid a license of a hundred pounds for the privilege of putting him to death. His whole property is then immediately taxed from two to ten per cent. Besides the probate, large fees are demanded for burying him in the chancel, his virtues are handed down to posterity on taxed marble; and he is then gathered to his fathers, to be taxed no more."

plans were well laid, and she had fixed her eye on that cradle of liberty -- the New-England States. One attempt was made after another, to seize upon that stronghold of Protestantism, but without success. "At length an armament of forty ships, under the Duke D'Anville, was fitted out for the destruction of those colonies. It put to sea from Chebucto, in Nova Scotia. But while the pious people, apprized of their danger, were, by fasting and prayer, looking to God for deliverance, a tempest suddenly arose, out of a previously clear sky, by which the greater part of that proud fleet was wrecked. The duke and his principal general committed suicide; many died with disease; and thousands found a watery grave. A small remnant, faint and spiritless, returned to France, and the enterprise was forever abandoned." God had reserved this land for better purposes: he intended it as the home of liberty, civil and religious. "Had New-England been

colonized immediately on the discovery of the American continent, the old english institutions would have been planted under the powerful influence of Popery, that giant depotism which had crushed the liberties of Europe. Had the settlement been made in the days of Elizabeth, it would have been before the activity of the popular mind in religion had conducted to a corresponding activity of mind in politics. America opened as a field of adventure, just at the time when mind began to assume its independence, and religion its vitality."

These facts are worthy of our gravest attention. Providence has carried forward a long train of events, to bring about the existing order of things in this country. Our advantages are of the highest order. The sun in his circuit looks down upon no such land. The coming generations of these States have a grand theatre on which to act.

And now, young man, you come forward, not to gaze with the dim eye of age

upon this fair field of enterprise; not bowed down with the weight of years; not trembling on the verge of life, and just ready to depart; but you come with the buoyancy of youth, the strength and vigour of early manhood. And,

> "With all the world before you where to choose,
> And Providence your guide,"

what is to hinder you from entering upon a high career of honour and usefulness?

3. *Great responsibilities are about to be committed to the young men of this nation.*

The magnitude of these interests can scarcely be estimated. The United States are now nearly as large as the whole of Europe. "When the mind attempts to grasp the thought of the present and prospective greatness of the people inhabiting this territory, the boundless resources to be developed by the skill and industry of a free

people, the influences that will emanate from such a nation for good or for evil, the mind is overwhelmed."

To the young men of our nation are these interests to be committed, -- and not these merely. The government of the Union, and of the several States, the legislation and execution of laws, the election of officers, are to be transferred to their hands; also the religious interests of the nation, with all her churches, and benevolent and humane institutions. With them it will be left to determine, whether this fair inheritance shall bloom in beauty, or become a moral waste; whether it shall remain the home of freedom, or its grave, -- whether law shall be respected, property and life safe, learning cherished, the tone of public morals elevated, and religion continue her aggressive and onward course; or whether the fires shall go out upon our altars, and our glory depart.

Nor would I fail to remind you, that as these great interests have thus far been built up -- by wise heads and laborious hands -- so they are to be sustained. The goodly machine is not that dream of folly, a perpetual motion. It requires the motive power of public spirit and intelligent piety, -- of great hearts and strong hands. It needs a generation of young men who look for great things, who plan great things, and work for great things.

When Dr. Chalmers was executing his plan of establishing parochial schools in connexion with St. John's parish, in Glasgow, he called on Dr. Taylor, the head of the college, in order to purchase a site belonging to that institution. In consequence of the importance and novelty of the undertaking he expressed a hope of obtaining it on reasonable terms. "The undertaking," said Dr. Taylor, "is an important one, but it is not a new one; we have been talking for twenty years of

establishing parochial schools in Glasgow." "Yes," said Dr. Chalmers; "but how many years more do you intend to talk about it? Now we are going *to do the thing*, and not talk about it; and so you must let the price be as moderate as possible, seeing we are going to take the labour of talking and projecting entirely off your hands."

A pithy answer this, and full of instruction. There is a vast difference between mere talking and doing. Young men, there is a great work before you. Up! quit you like men; be strong. The standard-bearers are falling. Seize the banner; unfurl it to the breeze. Everything around you cries, Do something while you may; act quickly, act vigorously!

With what deep, what absorbing interest, are the eyes of the wise and good turned towards our young men! How intently are they watching the principles you are imbibing, and the characters you are forming! With what intensity of

earnestness are they offering up their prayers to God, that a generation of young men may come forward, with characters formed upon the principles of *integrity*, *decision*, *energy*, and *benevolence*, -- a generation *devotedly pious, and extensively active and useful.*

Having them briefly alluded to your position and responsibilities, I proceed to notice, --

II. *Some of the cautions you should observe, and the qualifications you should seek.*

1. *Seriously consider your position and responsibilities.*

"I sometimes see, as I sit in my pew during the service," says Cecil, "an idle fellow saunter into the chapel. He gapes about him for a few minutes; finds nothing to arrest or interest him; seems scarcely to understand what is going forward; and after a lounge or two goes out again. I look at him, and think: Thou art a wonderful

creature! -- a perfect miracle! What a machine is that body! -- curiously, fearfully, wonderfully framed! an intricate, delicate, and harmonious structure! And then to ascend to thy soul -- its nature, its capacities, its actual state, its designation, its eternal condition! I am lost in amazement! while he seems to have no more consciousness of all this than the brutes that perish."

Vary the circumstances of this picture a little, and, alas, will it not be found a true portrait of but too many young men? They have no idea of either their weakness or their strength. Ask them what they are? and whither they are going? for what purpose they are in the world? and what they purpose to do in it? what claims society has upon them? and how they design to meet those claims? and you will find that these are questions to which they have never given an hour's serious attention. They have put to sea; but have no

idea of their destination. We have a striking illustration of these remarks, in the early life of Paley. "I spent," says he, "the first two years of my undergraduateship unprofitably. I was constantly in society where we were not immoral, but idle and expensive. At the commencement of the third year, after having left the usual party at a late hour, I was awakened at five in the morning by one of my companions, who stood at my bedside, and said: 'Paley, I have been thinking what a fool you are. I could do nothing, probably, if I were to try. I could afford the indolent life you lead. [A great mistake, by the way.] You could do everything, and cannot afford it. I have had no sleep during the whole night, on account of these reflections; and am now come solemnly to inform you that, if you persist in your indolence, I must renounce your society.' I was so struck with the visit, and the visitor, that I lay in bed a great part of the day, and formed my plan. I ordered my

bedmaker to lay my fire every evening, in order that it might be lighted by myself. I arose at five, read during the whole day, took supper at nine, went to bed, and continued the practice up to this hour." You scarcely need be told the result: -- That Paley has left behind him works which thousands continue to peruse with equal pleasure and profit; and which will doubtless survive as long as the english language shall continue to be a vehicle of thought.*

Here, my young friends, was a mind of the first class -- here were abilities of the highest order – in the utmost danger of accomplishing nothing for the benefit of mankind, -- of doing nothing better in the world than afford another illustration of the melancholy truth, that "with the talents of an angel a man may be a fool."

*Reference is here made to his "Natural Theology," and particularly to his *"Evidence of Christianity*," a work which cannot be too highly commended. His Moral Philosophy is not a safe guide.

2. *Resolve on reaching the highest attainable point of intelligence and virtue.*

The Being who made you, never endowed you with a single power or faculty that was not in a high degree improvable. While he gave you a body, more "curiously and wonderfully made," more delicate and complex in its organism, more noble and commanding in form, than any other material structure whatever, -- he gave you a mind, as much superior even to this master-piece in physics, as the jewel is superior to the casket in which it is enshrined. And every faculty of that mind he made capable of improvement, -- the understanding to become more sound, the judgment more acute, the will more authoritative, the conscience more discriminating, the emotions more tender, the heart more generous, the desires more eager, the habits of the soul more confirmed by each virtuous exercise.

Let your aims then be high. Add not to the number, already numberless, who have no elevation of character, -- no high aims, no ambition to act worthy of themselves. To see a being, created in the image of God, whose nature is spiritual, whose lifetime is eternity, whose companions may be angels, whose home heaven, -- to see such a being a mere sensualist, grovelling in the dust, or the mere gay insect of the hour, flitting from flower to flower in search of transient pleasures, -- to see a being of intellect, profoundly absorbed with the dreams of fancy, or, in its highest flights, reaching the lighter articles of newspapers and monthlies, and chilled with "a mental ague at the sight of a book that requires thought, or inculcates any of the serious duties of life," -- to see taste gravely employed in selecting baubles to adorn a fashionable exquisite, or contemplating these adornments in the mirror, -- to see a group

of fine-looking young men, gathered around some brawling dram-shop politician, or spending their evenings at billiards, or in oyster-saloons, O, these are sad sights! Descend not thus, young man; you have a higher destiny. You were sent into the world to ally yourself to great principles -- truth, justice, benevolence, purity; sent to exemplify them in your own character; sent to range yourself with the good, on the side of whatsoever things are true, and pure, and lovely, and of good report; and this you can do in any situation. These are principles you can call into action in the cottage as well as in the palace; in the mechanic's shop as well as in the legislator's seat, or on the judge's bench. The high archangel, abroad on his mission to some distant province of Jehovah's empire, acts on no higher principle than the teacher of two or three small children in a Sabbath school.

And, in cultivating your minds and hearts, seek solid aliment, grapple with

great truths; the mind, no less than the body, requires a nutritive aliment and a vigorous exercise. As no one could hope for health who should attempt to live upon confectionary, -- or for vigour of muscle or joint, who should take little or no exercise, -- so no mind can be healthy and vigorous which converses only with the light and fugitive publications with which the press teems. The Bible is pre-eminently a book that requires thought; it brings the mind in contact with great truths. The one single idea of a God -- whose power is omnipotent, whose wisdom is infinite, and whose being is eternal -- the Creator and Upholder of all things -- has more power to expand the intellect, than whole libraries, destitute of this mighty conception. "We would match the sacred volume against every other, when the object proposed in the perusal is the strengthening the understanding by contact with lofty truth, or

refining the taste by acquaintance with exquisite beauty."

Before passing from this topic, my young friends, I would like to have you just put these questions to yourselves, individually. What acquaintance have I with the book of God? Can I give a tolerable account of its prominent doctrines? Have I anything like a clear and concise view of its prophecies and their accomplishment? Have I in my own mind a correct conception of the nature of a miracle, so as to distinguish a real from a pretended one; and could I give some tolerable account of those recorded in the Old and New Testaments? Could I give the leading features of the historical and biographical portions of the Scriptures? And do I understand the general grounds on which the Bible challenges my belief, as a REVELATION FROM GOD?

I put these questions, not only because these are topics which you are greatly

concerned to understand; but also because many believe the Bible to be the word of God, who know too little of its contents. Here, for example, is a confession of one, -- and one, too, evidently far from being ignorant on general subjects, -- that I fear would apply to not a few.

"I had a book by me," says the writer, "which from prejudice of education, and not from any rational conviction, I called the word of God. I never went so far as to profess infidelity, but I was a more inconsistent character. I said that I believed a book to be a revelation from God, while I treated it with the greatest neglect, living in direct opposition to its precepts, and seldom taking the trouble to look into it; or, if I did, it was to perform a task -- a kind of atonement for my sins. I went on in this course of life, while the Melville Castle was detained at the Mother Bank by contrary winds; and having abundance of leisure for reflection, I began to think that I would pay

a little more attention to this book. The more I read it, the more worthy it appeared of God; and after examining the evidence with which Christianity is supported, I became fully persuaded of its truth."

Instead of being careless and indifferent about religion, he now came to see that it was "the chief end of man." And so will every *honest and intelligent inquirer* come to see that "*religion* is indeed the chief end of man." And it is not light that Christianity fears, but darkness; it is not knowledge, but ignorance. Pursue, then, my friends, an intelligent course. Sit down to the study of your Bibles, as you do to your chemistry, or astronomy. Pursue it with the same determination that you would your geometry or algebra. Nay, with much more diligence and determination; for you may live and die in ignorance of any particular branch of science, and yet be saved; but you cannot live and die ignorant of the way of salvation, without a loss,

which shall be not only irreparable, but eternal.

But in addition to this first and most important acquisition, *any* young man of common sense, and the twenty-six letters of the alphabet as his instruments, may, however limited his opportunities, become acquainted with many of the leading facts in history, -- may gain some general acquaintance with moral and mental philosophy, -- learn the nature and requirements of the constitution and government under which he lives, -- and study the lives of those great and good men, whose example furnishes one of the strongest stimulants to improvement in knowledge and virtue. And here let me say, that in these days of books, and multiplied facilities for the acquisition of knowledge, it is a shame for any young man to be ignorant.

Only think of a young man ignorant of his Bible, ignorant of morals, ignorant of

the science of mind, ignorant of history, with little or no acquaintance with biography, and even the constitution and government of his country, -- and yet *heard inquiring for the "latest novel*!" Such a young man, wherever he is to be found, will never -- unless he greatly alter for the better -- be fit to put a vote in the ballot-box, or to sit in the juror's seat; will never be of any service to the community, but will go down

"To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonour'd, and unsung."

Plan wisely, and act vigorously and perseveringly.

It is impossible to accomplish any important object without wise plans, and vigorous and persevering action. If the first be wanting, our energies are wasted. We may be constantly employed, we may bring every power into energetic action, and we may pursue an object with untiring

perseverance, -- but lo! the labouring mountain has brought forth a *mouse*! "Europus, king of Macedon, spent his time in making lanterns, -- a very useful article, but no business for a king. Horatius, king of Parthia, employed his time in catching moles, and was one of the best mole-catchers in the kingdom; but does it tell to his credit? Was Biantes of Lydia a useful man, or worthy ruler, though he was excellent at filing needles?" Plan wisely, then. Life has its great purposes; every man has his place in the great field. He has an aptitude for something, and Providence has work for him to do. In his providential calling, whatever it may be, he can be both useful and happy. It he attempt that to which he is unfitted, he will be perpetually mortified, disappointed, and discouraged, by a succession of blunders and failures. If his aim be below his capacity and position, he will waste his energies, and live to little purpose. Amid many objects of pursuit, of

which a person is capable, he should always choose the most important; and then resolve to reach the highest attainable excellence in accomplishing that object. What multitudes, by missing their way in life, are living uselessly, and dying unwept and unhonoured. A life of usefulness is missed, by vain attempts at something for which neither nature nor Providence ever designed us: or we live to no purpose, because we refuse to occupy the position that both nature and Providence did design for us. A good school-teacher spoils himself by vain attempts at becoming a statesman. A man designed to build good houses, squanders life in making poor sermons. Or a man of rare genius, capable of entrancing senates, or preaching the glorious gospel of the Son of God, is found associating with horse-jockeys on the race-course, or immured in mere money-making behind the counter. Now, the teacher is an honourable man *in his place*; but useless, and even ridiculous,

out of it. The mechanic is a respectable and useful man in his place; but it is a pity to spoil a good pin-maker to make a poor preacher. And more pitiable still is it, to see a man whose intellect, manners, and address might fit him for the highest walks of usefulness, herding with the most vulgar and vicious classes of society.

But however wisely we lay our plans, it will benefit us little, unless we act with energy and perseverance. "The slothful man saith, there is a lion in the way; I shall be slain in the streets." There are some difficulties to be encountered, some obstacles to be overcome; and the slothful sink down with despondency and inaction, while the energetic grapple with these difficulties, and find them one after another giving way, -- and their career becomes one continued series of successes and triumphs. It is, indeed, wonderful, to see what one sagacious, determined, and persevering spirit will accomplish. You may, perhaps,

recollect the prodigal, who had by profligacy wasted his patrimonial estates, and become the scorn of his worthless associates. Going out to put an end to his miserable life, he sat down on the brow of a hill, overlooking what were once his own possessions. Here he remained fixed in thought for some hours, when suddenly he sprang from the ground with a vehement and exulting emotion. His plan was formed; all these estates should be his again; he would seize the first opportunity of earning any sum, however small; and he would not spend a farthing, unless compelled by absolute necessity. The first thing that offered was a load of coals, shot from a cart upon the pavement. For putting them in their place he received a few pence; and then putting in practice the saving part of his plan, he solicited a small quantity of meat and drink, which were given him. He then looked out for the next thing that might offer, without regarding the meanness of the

occupation. The final result was, that he more than recovered his lost possessions, and died an inveterate miser, worth more than two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

Now I do not present this man's avarice before you for your imitation; but his sagacity, his energy, and his perseverance, afford an example, worthy of both admiration and imitation. They show what a cool selection of measures, an energetic will, and an indomitable perseverance can accomplish. Look around you, then, young men; form your plans, not for this world merely, but for the next. Aim high. Always allow moral and religious interests the first place. While you seek to be inferior to none in your secular calling, resolve to attain the highest excellence as a Christian; and to accomplish all in your power for the good of the circle in which you move. And, I repeat it, it is astonishing to see what one sagacious, active, persevering man may accomplish, -- how

high in influence and usefulness he may rise. By careful reading, thinking, and observation, he becomes so well-informed, as always to be heard with attention and respect; by unvarying truthfulness, honesty, and candour, he wins general confidence; by energy and perseverance he makes himself felt in all directions. The cause of education finds in him a wise and liberal supporter, good morals a devoted friend, and vice a determined opposer. Religion delights to point to him as an efficient advocate, and a high and commanding example. He seems to get time and energy for everything. He is in the school-meeting and at the temperance lecture. He finds time to instruct a Bible-class, or some other class in the Sunday school. His voice is heard in the prayer-meeting; and he is found distributing tracts for an hour on Sunday. His name is always on the subscription-list for building churches, and for supporting Bible societies and missions. He is the

widow's counsellor and the orphan's guardian. The young love and stand in awe of him; and the sceptic says, "If all professing Christians were like him, there would be a few unbelievers." He seems actually to infuse life and vigour into every one with whom he comes in contact; and every one works with courage when he is in the field. This, my young friends, is no overdrawn picture. You might find scores around you, any one of whom might form the original of the picture. Look at that little despised company at Oxford, who in derision were called, "The Godly Club;" and yet it contained men whose *decision*, *energy*, and *perseverance*, have been felt to the ends of the earth. The names of John and Charles Wesley, and George Whitefield, are household words throughout Christendom. And who has not heard of Mills, and Hall, and Richards, young men unknown to fame, and yet virtually the founders of one of the most efficient

missionary organizations in the world. They resolved to do something, not to be mere blanks in society, and they did it. Such men the world wants. They are the *mainsprings* of society. They are the motive-power of our benevolent institutions, and the very pillars in the temple of our God. And how many more might successfully aspire to this character? And with what regret, with what compassionate sorrow, do the good look upon many of our young men, who might strike for an enviable position and a glorious crown, -- but, in reality, are burying their talent in the dust, or expending all their energies in pursuits of which *self* is the beginning and the end. What golden opportunities are they losing, and how appalling must be their account, how bitter their remorse, when the voice of the righteous Judge shall be heard, saying, "Give an account of thy stewardship!" Forcibly does the poet describe the remorse

of him who closes a life of neglected opportunities on a death-bed of horror: --

"But look! whose shadows block the door?
Who are those two that stand aloof?
See! on my hands this fresh'ning gore
Writes o'er again its crimson proof.
My look'd-for death-bed guests are met,
There my dead youth doth wring its hands,
And there with eyes that goad me yet,
The ghost of my ideal stands!

"Men think it is an awful sight,
To see a soul just set adrift

On that drear voyage from whose night
The ominous shadows never lift;

But 'tis more awful to behold
A helpless infant newly born,
Whose little hands unconscious hold
The keys of darkness and of morn.

"Mine held them once; I flung away
Those keys that might have open set
The golden sluices of the day,
But clutch the keys of darkness yet;
I hear the reapers singing go
Into God's harvest, -- I that might

With them have chosen, here below
Grope shudd'ring at the gates of night.

"O glorious youth! that once wast mine,
O high ideal! all in vain
Ye enter at this ruin'd shrine,
Whence worship ne'er shall rise again;
The bat and owl inhabit here,
The snake rests in the altar-stone,
The sacred vessels moulder near,
The image of the God is gone."

3. *Cultivate decision of character.*

"A man," says Foster, "without decision can never be said to belong to himself. He belongs to whatever can seize him; and innumerable things do actually verify their claim upon him, and arrest him as he tries to go along, as twigs and chips, floating near the edge of a river, are intercepted by every weed, and whirled in every little eddy. Instead of seizing events and making them subservient to his will, events seize him, and carry him in opposition to his will."

Directly the reverse of this feeble and inefficient character, is the man of resolute purpose. "Advancing through life, with an internal invincible determination of mind, he seems to make the train of circumstances, whatever they may be, conduce as much to his chief design, as if they had taken place on purpose to serve him.

"One signal advantage possessed by a mind of this character, is, that its passions are not wasted. The whole measure of passion of which any mind, important transactions, before it, is capable, is not more than enough to supply interest and energy for its practical operations; as little, therefore, as possible should be expended in a way that does not augment the force of action.

"Another advantage of decision is, that is exempts from a great deal of interference and persecution, to which an irresolute man is subjected. Weakness in

every form tempts arrogance, -- and a man may be allowed to wish for a kind of character with which stupidity and impertinence may not make so free. When a firm, decisive spirit is recognised, it is curious to see how the space clears around a man, and leaves him room and freedom. The disposition to interrogate, dictate, and banter, preserves a respectful distance, judging it not unwise to keep the peace with a person of so much energy. A conviction that he understands, and that he wills with extraordinary force, silences the conceit that intended to perplex or instruct him, and intimidates the malice that was disposed to attack him.

"But not only will such a mind secure the freedom of acting for itself, -- it will, by degrees, obtain the co-operation of others, especially if the manners be free from arrogance, and wisdom and benevolence form the plans on which this force of character is exerting its energies. Both

competition and fear will be laid to sleep, -- and his will may acquire an unresisted ascendency over many, who will be pleased to fall into the mechanism of a system, which they find makes them more successful, and happier than they could have been amidst the anxiety of adjusting plans and expedients of their own -- and the consequences of often adjusting them ill."

Nowhere is this bold and firm quality more necessary than in our efforts for usefulness. We live in a world where nothing good or useful passes without opposition. Virtue and vice have long since marshalled their forces, and the world itself is one great arena for conflict. What benevolent institution was ever formed, what humane effort ever made, what fountain of misery dried up, without finding passions stirred, selfishness aroused, and tongues and pens employed in opposition? You may not even attempt to restore peace to the dwelling of the hapless inebriate, to

dry up the tears of his worse than widowed wife, and put bread into the mouths of his worse than orphan children, without encountering a fierce and determined hostility.

Believe me, then, my young friends, if you enlist in the cause of virtue, you must make up your minds to fight her battles. If you intend to serve your generation, you may draw the sword and cast away the scabbard, -- for in this warfare you will require *unconquerable decision of purpose*.

4. *Beware of the Utopian schemes of the day.*

Not a few fine young men, have been either greatly injured or entirely ruined by these schemes. They come forward, avowing designs which all good men approve; they would rid the world of its vices and its miseries. Their abettors are confident, just about in proportion as their theories are fallacious. In hearing their assumptions, or in attempting to reason with

them, one is reminded of Job's despair in attempting to reason with his mistaken friends. "No doubt," he exclaims, "ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you."

These *reformers*, *philosophers*, *socialists, communists*, or whatever else they are pleased to call themselves, have found

"The source of the disease which society feels,
And bid the world take heart, and banish fear."

All these evils originate, they tell us, in *bad systems of education, bad laws, and a vicious social organization*. If they could only have the privilege of once pulling society in pieces -- of breaking up the family institution, destroying the sanctity of marriage, allowing a man to divorce his wife when her beauty begins to fade and her health to decline; of herding together, in one great establishment, the refined and the vulgar, the industrious and the lazy, the

Christian and the infidel, the chaste and the licentious; of reforming the laws, and especially of overthrowing the Christian religion -- then they would put the machine together again, and it would run with the accuracy of clock-work.

Now, that society has its evils, its deep-rooted and appalling vices, there is no question. Every good man admits it; every good man deplores it; every good man seeks to prevent all the evil he can, and to promote all the good he can. But whence *originate* these evils? This is the question. If there are bad systems of education, bad laws, and evils in social life, whence came they? If men were pure, like angels, how came they to adopt these bad systems? Was it for want of *knowledge*, or for want of *virtue*? because they are ignorant of virtue, or because they love vice? Is the keeper of a gambling-saloon, or a dram-shop, or a house of ill-fame, ignorant or vicious -- which? Does he do it by mistake, or of set

purpose? Does a cruel husband abuse his wife, or a tyrannical father beat his children, because he knows no better? -- or because he has a brutal temper? And if these evils originate in a *bad heart*, then how are *combinations*, *associations*, and phalanxes to cure them? Are knaves and swindlers, the licentious and the profane, the idle and the brutal, to be transformed into honest men, chaste men, reverent and meek men, by the magic wand of Fourierism? Will he whose heart if full of impurity, become altogether chaste by allowing him twenty wives in succession?

"Vain reason all, and false philosophy."

Existing systems may have defects -- laws may need improvement; but our systems are infinitely better than the men who live under them. The root of our vices is not in our systems, but in our *hearts*. It is not the stream that should be first cleansed,

but the fountain. It is in vain to tamper with the fruit -- first make the tree good. Man is a fallen and degenerate being. "Out of the *heart* proceed corrupt things." No change of mere circumstances can change his character, or cure his vices. A sinner in heaven would be a sinner still. His guilt and misery would no more depart from him, by sending a company of angels to transport him to the palace of the universe, than the loathsome leper would be cured by sending a company of the king's servants to take him from his couch of straw, and carry him to a bed of down in the royal palace. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the only reforming system, -- repentance and a new birth unto righteousness the only radical cure. Society will grow better, just in proportion as you make men Christians. The world will grow happy, just as fast as it grows holy. The fountains of death will be dried up, just in proportion as the fountains of life are unsealed. The family circle will be happy,

just in proportion as benevolent feelings and Christian principles are introduced into the hearts of its inmates. "Till irreligion is exchanged for piety and selfishness is superseded by brotherly love, old Discord will resume his reign in the halls of each New Harmony. No law can change vice into virtue, or give to guilt the joys of innocence. No ruler can make the atheist happy, or kindle a blessed hope in that mephitic mind which has quenched its own lump of immortality. When Hercules put on the poisoned robe, it did not matter where he went -- no change of climate, no breezy height, no balmy sky, could lull the venom in his fiery veins. Restless and roaming, he wandered to and fro, and raged at everything; but the real quarrel was with his tainted self, -- and the change that would have relieved his misery, would have been a migration from his own writhing nerves and stounding bones. And let a man of idle or immoral habits, or let a [vicious] family

try all the constitutions in the world, and they will soon discover, that to a guilty conscience or a dissolute character political day-springs bring no healing. Legislation contains no charm -- no spell for converting personal or domestic wretchedness into virtue and tranquility; and so long as a man is entangled in his own corruption -- so long as he wears the poisoned vest of inherent depravity -- 'he may change the place, but he cannot cheat the pain.'"

We are in want, not so much of new schemes, as of old Christianity embraced heartily, and carried out practically. Let him who would improve society begin with himself. Let him seek a new heart and a right spirit. Let him possess the mind that was in Christ, and then go about doing good. Give society the will to reform, and the way will not be difficult. She groans under burdens of her own choosing -- burdens of vice and depravity. Dry up her

springs of iniquity, and you cast off her load of oppressions and wrongs.

But once more. To become good and do good, *ally yourselves, young men, with the wise and good*; this will bring the whole power of example and association to bear upon you. You will daily behold virtue embodied. Integrity, truth, and benevolence, cheerfulness and contentment, will appear in their native beauty and attractiveness. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise." Here unite the force of example, the tenderness of sympathy, and the fervency of love. And with the wise is God's peculiar blessing. His promise is to them -- his providence is over them -- his Spirit dwells with them. Go with them to the house of God on the Sabbath, -- not once merely, but throughout the day. Kneel with them at the family altar, mingle with them in the prayer-circle, unite with them in the Bible-class and the labours of the Sabbath school. Join with them in relieving

the needy, and sending the gospel to those "who are perishing for lack of knowledge;" and according to your opportunity and ability -- be they more or less -- be ready for every good work.

Finally, listen, while I set before you some of the great motives which urge you to the high and holy work of *"serving your generation."* It is THE WILL OF GOD. "David, when he had served his generation *by the will of God*, fell on sleep, and was gathered to his fathers."

The will of God is founded in infinite wisdom and infinite benevolence. He knows perfectly well *where* we should be employed, and *how* we should be employed. If every sun and planet in the universe were searched to find a field of labour *for us*, the one which He has chosen would be found every way the best adapted to our capacities and our interests. If a good man were, for the time being, to be endued with an archangel's powers, and allowed, with an

archangel's speed, to wing his way to any part of the extended universe -- to investigate principles, explore fields, and converse with various orders of beings -- he would come back to re-commence the work he had left, and finish his probation just where God had first assigned him a field and a work. He would come back to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, to visit the sick and minister to those in prison. He would come back to deny himself, and bear his cross; to instruct the ignorant, and reclaim the vicious; to hallow the Sabbath, and fill his seat in the sanctuary; to pray to the social circle, and labour in the Sabbath school. He would come back to the world to which his Saviour came, and engage in carrying forward his Saviour's grand design, of winning souls from sin to holiness. He would come back, though it were to weep, to suffer, and to die.

And is it not a most wise and most benevolent economy, which makes it a

man's great business to serve his generation? Could a greater calamity befall us than to deprive us of such a privilege? Do we not need a moral discipline in just such a school? -- a school of patience and self-denial, of joys and sorrows, of smiles and tears. Moreover, if we are to dwell together in a heaven of love, -- then, what an economy is that, which makes one redeemed sinner the instrument of another's salvation! What an economy is that, which binds them each to other, not only as saved by the same Deliverer, brought into the same relation, and exalted to the same privileges, but which binds them to each other as *benefactors* and *recipients*!

It is also the will of God that you should glorify him; and by serving your generation you do glorify him. You glorify God the Father, who gave his Son to redeem sinners; you glorify God the son, who loved us, and gave himself for us; you glorify the Holy Spirit, who takes the place

of Christ's visible presence on earth, while he is in heaven as our Mediator and Intercessor.

It is the will of God that you should enlarge your capacity, brighten your crown of glory, and prepare yourself for entering upon an inheritance "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." And all this you do, if, as a Christian, you serve your generation.

LECTURE VII.

PIETY IN EARLY LIFE.

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. -- Eccles. 11:9

A Christian king of Hungary being very serious and pensive, his brother, a gay courtier, inquired the cause. "O, brother," said the king, "I have been a great sinner against God; I know not how to die, and appear before him in judgment." His brother, making a jest of it, said, "These are but melancholy thoughts." The king made no reply; but as it was the custom of the country, that when the executioner came and sounded the trumpet before any man's door, that person should be immediately led to execution -- the monarch, in the dead of

night, sent the executioner to sound the trumpet before his brother's door. The brother, hearing the trumpet of death, and seeing the messenger of death, sprung into the king's presence, beseeching to know in what he had offended. "Alas, brother!" said the king, "you have never offended me; but if the sight of my executioner is so dreadful, shall not I, who have greatly offended, fear to be brought before the judgment-seat of Christ?"

What could be more pertinent? Life is a serious concern. It is a solemn probation, every day of which looks to the out-spreading future, -- and the transcendent interests of that future are to be determined by the manner in which we deport ourselves here. "Enter a court of justice; there is one concentrated point of interest and attention. However splendid the forms of its administration, however solemn its functionaries, whatever may have been the dreadness of its issues, until law seemed to

have been built up into a throned state, and to be covered with a spotless robe -- all are forgotten while we gaze upon the prisoner at the bar. There he stands, -- what a spectacle! The excess of feeling has confounded every feature, until they have lost their power of expression; and yet how keenly alive is he to every word, to every glance! How his eye rivets! how attentive his ear! Every function and organ seem to vibrate. The representative of justice, the death-man himself, were not half so impressive as that poor culprit foreboding the verdict of his guilt. We were spectators then; but we shuddered from the mere force of sympathy. We are ourselves to be cited; we must ourselves confront this inquest. 'Awake, ye who have ever lived, ye who have ever died,' must soon sound in our ear."

What then is to be done? How are we to meet that great assize? These, my young friends, are the questions -- the questions, in

comparison with which all others are the merest trifles -- lighter than the small dust in the balance. It is to the subject of personal piety, to a complete preparation for that day, that I wish to rivet your attention on the present occasion. And in enforcing the claims of personal religion upon you, I by no means wish to present it, either in its relations to the present or the future, *only* in its aspects of dread and solemn majesty. Unquestionably it has these aspects -- more dread, more solemn, than the most powerful intellect or the most vivid imagination ever conceived; but it has its mild, its gentle, its serene aspects. If the God of the Bible is a magistrate -- robed in justice, "terrible in majesty," "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," to impenitent sinners "a consuming fire," -- he is also a benign Father, full of pity, long-suffering, slow to anger, rich in mercy, and waiting to be gracious. If the coming judgment is inconceivably solemn, it may be also

inconceivably joyful and glorious; if an eternity of guilt and misery is dreadful beyond thought or conception, an eternity of holiness and happiness must be infinitely glorious and desirable. Listen, then, while I address you on a subject, in which all your real interests are concentrated. In doing this, I shall attempt to point out some of your dangers; and then urge upon you such motives, and offer you such advice, as the Bible presents, and our limits permit.

1. *One of your greatest dangers lies in thoughtlessness and inattention.*

What am I? and whither am I bound? are questions which it is to be feared many young persons seldom ask. They are wholly engrossed with passing events. They have heard of immortality, but have no just conception of it -- that they themselves are to live *forever*; but the word *forever* to them has no definite meaning. Volatile as the butterfly, light as the thistle-down, their daily history may be comprised

in one single sentence -- *"Who mind earthly things*." A gentleman passing in a carriage, asked a young man to ride with him.

"And what," said he to the young stranger, "are your plans for the future?"

"I am a clerk, and my hope is to succeed and get into business for myself."

"And what next?"

"I intend to marry, and set up an establishment of my own."

"And what next?"

"To retire from business, and enjoy the fruit of my labour."

"And what next?"

"It is the lot of all to die, and of course I cannot escape," replied the young man.

"And what next?" once more asked the gentleman.

The young man was silent; his plans extended no farther than the present life. So it is with thoughtless multitudes. The great, boundless, limitless future is shut out of their thoughts. Where shall I spend

eternity? is a question they never seriously propound at the bar of either reason or revelation! Is this wise? is it rational? is it safe? is it worthy of a being who calls himself *man*? "He who lives only for time, descends to the level of the beasts that perish. He may build a finer house than the beaver, and amass more stores than the bee, and travel farther than a bird of passage, and rival the butterfly in show, and the bird in song; but if these things engross his soul, and absorb all his time, his rational powers are let down to mere animal instincts, -- and the *results* of his life have no more relation to heaven than the songs of a bird, or the pursuits of a beast. Is this manly? When eternity throws open its interminable duration, its entrancing glories, its unutterable horrors, its unchangeable destinies -- shall time be allowed to hide these from us? or to hush up all concern about them?"

"We may delay the work of repentance, and think the future far off -- *but it will come*; our last call from heaven far off -- *but it will come*; our last unavailing effort to repent far off -- but *it will come*; the death-struggle, the shroud, and the funeral far off -- but *they will come*; the day of judgment, the day of reckoning, far off -- but *it will come*; the sentence, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,' far off -- but *it will come*; eternal banishment from the presence of the Lord, weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, far off -- *but they will come*."

Gird thyself, then, O young man! for the task; rise up to these mighty contemplations. Carry thy thoughts into the amazing, illimitable future; call to thy aid numbers and imagination; suppose every blade of grass an age, and the years of eternity multiplied by the drops of the morning; and when thy thoughts have extended onward, and onward, until they

sink down exhausted with the effort -- remember that, when the utmost point is actually reached, thy spirit -- *living, thinking, suffering*, or *enjoying* -- will still look forward to ETERNITY -- ENDLESS, UNCHANGEABLE, ILLIMITABLE -- ROLLING BEFORE IT! Thy existence runs parallel with God's! So long as he endures, so long shall that flame which he has breathed into they bosom glow and burn; but it must glow in the brilliance and beauty of heaven, or burn with lurid flame and unextinguishable woe!"

And wilt thou, canst thou, be thoughtless and inattentive, with such a destiny opening before thee? Destined, by the unalterable laws of thy being, to move onward -- to live, and think, and feel, somewhere, in some employment, in some company, without limit -- forever -- is it a matter of little consequence as to elicit no interest? as not to even engage thy thoughts?

2. *Another danger arises from false views of the nature of religion.*

What temptations assail the young here! Sometimes they look upon Christianity as an unwelcome visitant, come to disturb them in the midst of their favourite occupations and pursuits; come to demand the renunciation of what they love most, and to enforce upon them what they relish least. They fancy that to be a Christian is to renounce all that sparkles with wit, or is adorned by beauty; to lose all relish for life, and go bowed down under a galling burden. That the sun will no longer shine with his wonted brilliancy; and the bow in the cloud will lose half his charms; that the light must fade from the eye, the smile no longer play upon the features. How common this delusion! How often is piety arrayed in this hideous garb! How often is it said -- "To become pious, I must give up my pleasures!"

Whence did this caricature of piety originate? From the visage of the hypocrite, who *puts on "a sad countenance*?" from the tones of him who pours out his sorrows over the abounding wickedness of his neighbourhood? or from him, who sometimes assumes the craft of the fox, when the roaring of the lion might prove fatal to his purpose? From whatever source it comes, it is but *a caricature*; and the mixture of truth with falsehood makes it all the more mischievous. Religion does, indeed, require the renunciation of what the sinner loves -- of all those *sinful* pleasures, which "he rolls as a sweet morsel under his tongue;" but she gives him in their place pleasures both pure and permanent -- pleasures, that "like a well of water spring up unto everlasting life." She has her sorrows and her tears; but they are sorrows that make the heart better, and the life holier. Let any one who is haunted with these false views, go to his Bible, -- and he

will find the elements of religion to be *love, and joy, and peace*. Let him go to the best Christian he can find, and sit down with him in social converse, kneel by his family altar, or visit his bed of sickness: he will find piety to be cheerful as the sunlight, gentle as the falling dews, hopeful as the bow of promise.

Listen to the voice of *true piety*: "Come, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul: As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he separated my sins from me." "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thy iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." Is this the language of gloom? Can "*love*"

produce sadness? is "*joy*" the fountain of melancholy? is "peace," "great peace," "peace like a river," "peace that passeth knowledge," to be accounted a burden? Was Peter sad, when the angel sent to open his prison doors, found him locked in gentle slumbers? or was Paul melancholy when his midnight songs rang out from "the innermost dungeon," at Philippi?

When the poet, Carpani, inquired of his friend, HAYDN, how it happened that his Church music was always so *cheerful*, -- the great composer replied: "I cannot make it otherwise; I write as I feel. When I think upon God, my heart is so full of joy, that the notes dance and leap, as it were, from my pen; and since God has given me a cheerful heart, it will be pardoned me that I serve him with a cheerful spirit.

But here, now, is another picture, -- not from the ages gone by, but from our own, -- not from a solitary case, but one of *instances* innumerable. "My letter was

interrupted," says Mr. Watson, "by my being called to visit an old follower of Jesus Christ. I have been much profited by the interview. I have been not to instruct, but to be instructed. One of his expressions was: 'Days, weeks, and months have rolled round during my affliction; I have scarcely known the night from the day, nor the day from the night, so rapidly and so joyfully have the hours escaped me. I have felt nothing but joy and love. Not for a moment have I been impatient, or weary, nor wished it otherwise with me, -- so marvellously has God wrought in me. This is the hand of God; this never grew in nature's soil. Glory! glory be to God! Not unto me, but unto his name be the glory.' On my saying, that the reasons for his heavy afflictions being permitted would be fully explained hereafter, he said, eagerly: 'God is explaining them to me now. I do not wait for light. All is clear. Wondrously does he work in me every moment, and make every

thought praise and prayer!' Now, what would an infidel say to this? Lord, give me this religion, and let the world have its philosophy!"

Permit another example. It is of one, young like yourselves;* and one, who for readiness of wit, solidity of judgment, retentiveness of memory, and attractiveness of manners, had few equals. At the early age of twenty-three he yielded up his spirit to God, who gave it; and this was his language: --

"O my friends, stand by and wonder! Come, look upon a dying man, and wonder! I cannot myself but stand and wonder! Was there ever a greater kindness? were there ever more sensible manifestations of rich grace? Surely this is akin to heaven; and if I were never to enjoy any more than this, it were well worth all the torments that men and devils could invent, to come through

*John Janeway.

even a hell to such transcendent joys as these. If this be dying, dying is sweet: let no true Christian ever be afraid of dying. O, death is sweet to me! O that you could but see and feel what I do! Come, and behold a dying man! more cheerful than ever you saw a healthful man, in the midst of his sweetest enjoyments. O, sirs! worldly pleasures are pitiful, poor, sorry things, compared with one glimpse of this glory which shines so strongly into my soul. O! why should any of you be so sad, when I am so glad? This, this is the hour that I have waited for! I shall, before a few hours are over, be in eternity, singing the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb. I shall presently stand upon Mount Zion, with an innumerable company of angels; and the spirits of the just made perfect; and Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant. I shall hear the voice of much people; and be one amongst them that shall say, Hallelujah. Salvation, glory, honour, and power, unto

the Lord our God; and again we shall say, Hallelujah. And yet a very little while, and I shall sing unto the Lamb, saying: 'Worthy art thou to receive praise, who wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto God, kings and priests; and we shall reign with thee forever and ever.'

"Methinks I stand, with one foot as it were in heaven, and the other upon earth. Methinks I hear the melody of heaven; and by faith I see the angels waiting to carry my soul to the bosom of Jesus: and I shall be forever with the Lord. And who can choose but rejoice in all this?"

It is related of Dr. Leechman, that, upon his death-bed, he thus addressed the son of a nobleman, who had been under his care: "You see, my young friend, the situation in which I now am. I have not many days to live, and am happy that you witness the tranquility of my last moments;

but it is not tranquility alone, it is joy and triumph; nay, it is complete exultation!" His features brightened, and his voice rose in energy as he spoke. "And whence," said he, "does this exultation spring? From that book, too much neglected, indeed, but which contains invaluable treasures, -- treasures of bliss and rejoicing; for it makes us certain that this mortal shall put on immortality."

We may grant, my friends, that these are specimens of the higher class; that all Christians are not to the same extent joyful, that all are frequently and on many accounts sorrowful; and that such *raptures* are more generally the accompaniments of that period when the cross has been borne, and the arduous discipline, and the stringent self-denial of a probationary state are about closing. But still, they powerfully illustrate our position, that religion is so far from robbing us of our pleasures, that "her ways are ways of pleasantness;" that a religious

life, as it is the only rational and safe life, is also the only really happy life. And I have chosen *examples*, as the best calculated to impress, and facts, as the most forcible and interesting of all arguments. And, in view of such facts, will you, can you, allow yourselves ever again to express, or even indulge the thought, that in becoming devout you must become unhappy?

Contrast the testimonies given above, with the following confession of one of the gayest, and most favoured of the sons of pleasure -- the celebrated Lord Chesterfield. This nobleman ran the whole round of the world's pleasures and follies. He has been not inaptly styled, *"the high priest of the world's vanities*." Born to rank, wealth, and honour, possessed of fine talents, aiming at being thought the most polite man of his day, and entirely unscrupulous about the manner in which he accomplished his ends, he withheld not his soul from the enjoyment

of any sensual delight. The results are given in his own words: --

"I have run," says he, "the silly round of business and of pleasure, and I have done with them all. I have enjoyed all the pleasures of the world, and consequently know their futility, and do not regret their loss. I appraise them at their real value, which is in truth very low; whereas those who have not experienced them, always over-rate them. They only see the gay outside, and are dazzled with their glare; but I have been behind the scenes, and have seen all the coarse pullies and dirty ropes which move and exhibit the gaudy machines. I have seen and smelt the tallow candles which illuminate the whole decorations, to the astonishment and admiration of an ignorant audience. I look back on all that is past, as one of those romantic dreams which opium commonly produces, and have no wish to repeat the nauseous dose. I have been as wicked and

as vain as Solomon; but am now, at last, able to feel and attest the truth of his reflections -- that 'all is vanity, and vexation of spirit.' Shall I tell you that I bear this situation with resignation and constancy? No; I bear it because I must, whether I will or not. I think of nothing but killing time the best way I can, now that it has become my enemy."

But to return to the point whence we set out. I said you were in danger from false views of religion; and I have dwelt upon one class of false views. But there are others; error is a hydra -- false views abound. Like the ever-varying views in a kaleidoscope, delusion is ever appearing under new aspects. That against which I would now caution you, I scarcely know how to name. Perhaps I may say it is a compound of *Pharisaism and sentimentality*.

A person is honest in his business, patriotic in his feelings, courteous in his

manners, and peacable in his intercourse with his neighbours. He looks abroad, and sees thousands of worse men than himself, -- dishonest, scheming, over-reaching, -- not truthful, not chaste, -- unkind, oppressive, loose in principle and worse in practice. Now this man has a sort of *negative virtue*, that appears quite to advantage compared with the latter class. "Whose ox have I taken, or whom have I despoiled of either property or character," cries he. "I have robbed no helpless widow, oppressed no orphan; the hirelings who has reaped down my fields, has received his wages. I have never corrupted any by the dissemination of false sentiments."

If, in addition, this man can boast of generous sympathies; if a tale of sorrow choke his utterance and suffuse his eyes with tears; if he is generous in relieving suffering; and if, moreover, he have a keen perception of the true and beautiful in nature and morals; if he admire the sublime

and the wise, the beneficent and the true, he concludes himself to be a very good Christian. And so his complaisant neighbours conclude likewise; and the murmur of their praise falls upon his ear like the music of paradise. Precisely such a character was that young man of wealth, honour, office, and of amiable instincts, who came to the Saviour inquiring, "what good thing he should do to inherit eternal life." And yet with all his virtues and amiabilities, his "great possessions" on earth, were *dearer far* to his heart than "a treasure in heaven." The love of God was not there; the spirit of loyalty was not there; no process of repentance, or faith, or renewal, had ever taken place in his heart; and he turned away from the offers of life mournful and dejected. A lesson this from the Book of life, replete with melancholy interest; but fraught with solemn lessons of instruction. Build not, dear youth, on this sandy foundation; it will never withstand

the storms and the tempests. The hopes built upon it will fall, -- and great and irreparable will be the ruin. Go to your Bibles. There you will learn your true character -- that "*The carnal mind is enmity against God*;" that "*The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint*;" that, "*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*." That so desperate is his case, so depraved his heart, so great his guilt, that none but an almighty Deliverer could rescue him; none but an infinite Saviour could atone for his transgressions, or roll off the burden of his iniquities. The fairest specimens of unrenewed men -- the most moral, amiable, generous, and benevolent -- have been most deeply convicted of their sinfulness and have "abhorred themselves, repenting in dust and ashes." Such examples were Wesley and Fletcher, Brainard and Payson, with multitudes of others. It is indeed a very significant fact, that the more holy one

becomes, the clearer his light, the stronger his love, the more ardent his devotional feelings, the more he approaches the world of light; and the more he experiences of the "powers of the world to come," the more clearly does he perceive the truth of those two cardinal doctrines of Christianity -- *human depravity and salvation by grace.* How often do we find illustrations of this fact in reading, and by the couches of the dying! I recollect some time since, standing by the dying pillow of a pious physician, and this in substance was his language: "I have a disease, obstinate and virulent. Such is the character of the secretions of the stomach, that every kind of food -- however nutritive in its qualities, or well adapted to support life -- the instant it is seized upon by these secretions it is converted into poison. "So," said he, "it is with sin; it turns every blessing into a curse."

Ah, thought I, how true is this! How deep and dreadful is human depravity! Life

is good -- it was given for high and beneficient purposes; but how many will one day wish they had never been born! They reject the only saving remedy -- the gospel -- and turn existence into a most tremendous and enduring curse. They were offered a home in the palace of the universe -- they madly plunge into the prison-house of despair. The Bible is good; but how will its neglected truths rise up in judgment against them! The gospel is good; but to them it proves only "a savour of death unto death." You must, dear friends, understand this; you must faithfully study your Bibles, and earnestly cry to God, till he *show you yourselves*, and you feel your *need* of *"a new creation* in righteousness and true holiness."

3. *Another danger arises from a disposition to procrastinate.*

"Life," says Foster, "is expenditure: we have it, but as continually losing it; we have the use of it, but as continually wasting

it. Suppose a man confined to some fortress, under the doom to stay there until his death, and suppose there is for his use a dark reservoir of water, to which it is certain none can ever be added. He knows, suppose, that the quantity is not very great; he cannot penetrate to ascertain how much, but it may be very little. He has drawn from it, by means of a fountain, a good while already, -- and draws from it every day. But how would he feel each time of drawing, and each time of thinking of it? Not as if he had a perennial spring to go to; not, 'I have a reservoir, I may be at ease.' No; but, 'I had water yesterday -- I have water to-day; but my having had it, and my having it to-day, is the very cause that I shall not have it on some day that is approaching; and at the same time I am compelled to this fatal expenditure!' So of our mortal, transient life! And yet men are very indisposed to admit the plain truth, that life is a thing which they are in no other

way possessing than as necessarily consuming; and that even in this imperfect sense of possession, it becomes every day less a possession."

This is a truth which all know, but the force of which few feel. The propensity to procrastinate, despite all the dictates of reason, the remonstrances of conscience, and the solemn warnings of the word of God, is still fearfully prevalent, and every year terrifically ruinous. In every congregation, there is a large number who admit the claims of religion, who admit the sinfulness and peril of their state, who purpose amendment at *some future period*, who would start back with horror from the thought of dying as they are living; and yet no argument, no entreaty, no examples of the fatal effects of procrastination seem to move them from their *habit* of ruinous delay. It is precisely here, my friends, that your pastors encounter the greatest discouragements. They have before them a

class which they can but deem the most hopeful among their hearers. They are not sceptical; they are not thoughtless; they are not indifferent. They are regular in their attendance, attentive to the truths spoken, -- kind, courteous, and respectful. They would defend religion against the infidel, rebuke the scoffer and profane, and shame some professors by the liberality of their contributions, to sustain the Church and all her benevolent institutions. They welcome the pastor's visits, and are among his kindest friends; and yet, alas, how many of this class does he see lying down upon the couch of death without preparation! how many does he follow to the grave, mournfully exclaiming: "O that they had been wise, that they had considered their end!" Some of these he finds stupified with drugs, or wild with delirium; some overborne with the pressure of disease, and scarcely able to think at all; some fondly dreaming that a few days will restore them

to wonted health; but from most he is compelled to depart, saying, in mournful and deep complaint, -- "Alas! a sick bed is a poor place for accomplishing a work that requires rather a lifetime." Delay! O! it hardens the heart, it grieves the spirit, it squanders invaluable time, it settles into a habit, -- and in the end it not unfrequently leads to decided aversion; while all the time the world is active in multiplying its cares, and increasing its power over the captive. Sin is active in strengthening its bands, associates are active in drawing him farther away from God, the tempter is active in securing his victim, hope fades away in the distance, conscience has less power, the Spirit finds a less impressible subject, and life draws towards its close with prospects the most dismal and appalling. O ye, dear youth, awake! leave not to an uncertain hereafter the great work of preparation! Propose not to accomplish on an agitated, tossing sick-bed, -- when the hand of

friendship must turn you from side to side, and wet your parched lips, when pain distracts, or reason reels, -- propose not then to attend to the work that requires all the force of a strong intellect, all the decision of a strong will, and all the energies of a sound body. Propose not the period of old age as a time for repentance. Small are the hopes of that period *of fixed habits, and hearts wedded to the world*. The late Dr. Bedell, of Philadelphia, in a sermon to young men, stated, that he had been a minister over twenty years, -- and yet he could not remember more than *three* persons, over fifty years of age, who had, during those twenty years, asked the momentous question, *What must I do to be saved?*

Following the example of that book of unerring wisdom, -- "which adapts itself to our nature, which blends religion with history and biography, so that while we read the rule we may see the exemplification, and be reproved, excited or encouraged

accordingly, which gives us actions rather than words," -- I shall again resort to example: --

"I spent," says a pastor, "the year of -- ---, in the village of D-----. Well might we learn that year of God, and the good things of God; the cloud was constantly lifted from the tabernacle, and, by consequence, the tabernacle moved on; fruitful showers were constantly descending, and flowers sprang up; some of them have been transplanted to a more genial clime, and are now blooming in paradise. We had no special period of excitement, no extraordinary appliance of the means of grave; yet, all through the year, there was manifest, in the congregation attendant upon our church, a deep religious interest. Sinners were frequently converted, and added to the Church, and the repentant backslider was, ever and anon, welcomed to her bosom and her love.

"It was our custom to meet frequently at the lecture-room of the church, and, after listening to a short and usually pointed sermon, to invite penitents to the altar, and cry aloud to God for their salvation: the invitation was rarely rejected by all in the congregation; and often have we rejoiced around that altar, while the angels rejoiced on high, over the repentant sinner turning from the error of his ways. At one of these meetings, the narrative, which I took up my pen to repeat, was elicited.

"It often happened that the pastor, leaving the altar in charge of the brethren, passed through the congregation to converse with, here and there, one whose manner seemed to warrant it, upon the all-important subject of the soul's salvation. One evening, as he passed down the aisle, on this errand of mercy, his attention was arrested by the serious and somewhat sad expression of a gentleman who had recently established himself as a physician in the

neighbourhood, but with whom he was as yet unacquainted. Kindly and modestly he inquired if he enjoyed religion, and receiving an affirmative answer, invited him to speak some word of exhortation to others; this he respectfully declined. The meeting was a blessed one; and as we gathered after its close around the fireside, (I was an inmate of the preacher's household,) it became the topic of conversation; the physician and his remarkably serious aspect were alluded to, and some of us wondered why, where so sweet a spirit reigned, he refused to speak of Jesus. We did not wonder long, for he called the following afternoon, and, explaining that an impediment of speech rendered it impossible for him to speak in public, placed in the preacher's hand a paper, saying, "Here, sir, is what I would have said, could I have spoken." He gave him permission to make any use of it that would in his judgment serve the cause of

Christ, and, a few evenings after, it was read to the congregation. None who heard, I think, can have forgotten it. The paper is not in my possession, but I shall give, as nearly as recollection can furnish, its contents. It ran thus: --

"In my sixteenth year I went, in company with a cousin of about my own age -- he was a noble lad, from whose eye flashed forth the fire of genius, and in whose bosom glowed the generous affections of youth -- to a somewhat celebrated seminary in New-England to finish our studies, preparatory to the commencement of a collegiate course. We had been but a short time inmates of the institution, when the spirit began to be poured out, and a glorious revival of religion ensued. At first a few knelt penitently at the footstool of mercy, and rose rejoicing in hope of everlasting life; then others came, and others still, until almost the entire school gave way to the

blessed influence. The regular exercises of the school-room were given over for meetings of prayer and inquiry; and the sigh of the prisoner, and the shout of the freed captive mingled and went up together to the skies from almost every quarter of the institution. Deeply convinced, by the divine influence, of sin and unbelief, I sought, at an early period in the revival, and, I trust, found that Saviour who has since, in my deepest afflictions and sorest trials, proved to me a never-failing source of consolation. My cousin remained apparently unmoved. While others were forced, by deep conviction, entirely to forego their studies, he attended to his with apparently renewed zest and eagerness. No consideration, no appeal, no entreaty could move him for an hour to neglect them. Again and again I besought him, with all the ardour and the tenderness of one but just escaped from the destroyer's power, to consider his situation, and seek his Saviour. Sometimes he would

appear totally unmoved, and though he replied to me kindly, yet would he firmly refuse to follow my advice. Sometimes a strong and hard-to-be-controlled struggle would seem going on within, -- his chest would heave, his cheeks flush, and the big tear start unbidden to his eye; but a will, apparently indomitable, would ever dictate the same firm refusal. My heart had well-nigh sunk within me through his repeated refusals, and a burden of anguish, that almost turned my joy to mourning, rested on my spirit, when I determined to make one effort more. I had just left a social prayer-circle, and taking him kindly by the hand, I began once more to tell him the anxiety I felt on his account; scarcely had the first word fallen from my lips, when he turned towards me, his countenance was ashy pale, his eye glared with a strange, to me it seemed an almost demoniac lustre, his lips were compressed and bloodless, his whole frame shook as if an ague were upon

him, and he hissed -- he did not speak, he did not whisper -- he hissed through his closed teeth, '*Don't make me hate you.*' Years have passed, but I can still see that look of combined misery and hate, and hear that thrilling hiss -- '*Don't make me hate you.*' I dropped his hand, and retired by myself to weep and pray. When we met again, a few hours after, it was as friends, and the, to me, heart-rending interview, appeared by him to be forgotten. I never ventured to address him on the subject of religion again. The revival soon closed, and left him almost the only unconverted member of the school. Time passed rapidly on; our preparatory studies were completed, and we entered college together. My cousin was moral, industrious, and generous; he had talents of the highest order, and of course stood high in the estimation of the faculty, and of his fellow-students. Our friendship was unabated. We graduated. Hitherto we had been inseperable

companions; but now we parted, he to pursue the study of the law -- I, of medicine. For three years, absorbed in the pursuit of our respective professions, we had but little communication, save by letter. His advancement in his professional studies was rapid, and bespoke future greatness. When he returned to his home a member of the bar, he was a partner of the distinguished lawyer who had been his instructor. Having completed our professional studies, we visited our homes together. Our parents lived but a short distance apart, in a beautiful seaport village, and we, who had been heretofore so little, but now so long, parted -- we, who were soon to part again -- to part with home and friends, perhaps forever -- met to spend a little time in pleasant recreation, ere we set out to toil in earnest upon the dry and dusty highway of life. We had but little time, and that must be improved. We planned a sailing party for the day after arrival home.

On the morning of that day I rose betimes, and had just completed my toilet, and commenced some little preparation for the excursion, from which we all anticipated an unusual degree of pleasure, when, breathless from haste and excitement, a servant of my uncle's entered the house, and requested me to hasten to his master's, while he ran for a neighbouring physician. Before I could ask an explanation he was gone. Conjecturing that some sad accident had befallen some member of the family, I hastened to the house, and was directed by the sound of weeping to the room which my cousin always occupied when at home. Upon entering, I beheld a scene that I can never forget. There, with his father, mother, and sisters, around his bed-side -- the mother and sisters weeping with an anguish that could not be controlled, and the strong father trembling like an aspen, as he supported in his arms his dying son -- lay my cousin. A stream of blood was gushing

from his mouth, and staining the snowy counterpane, on which he lay, with its crimson hue. His eye, rolling wildly in its socket, caught me as I entered, and springing half-way from his bed, as the blood fairly bespattered the opposite wall, he shouted, 'My God! My God! Hell! Hell!' and expired. Upon inquiry, I learned, that in making preparation for the intended excursion of the day, he had endeavoured to lift some heavy article, and in the attempt ruptured a blood-vessel. I have said that I shall never forget that death-scene; I cannot. Time may rob me of the memory of my dearest friends, of every trace of childhood's happy days, of the home where I was born, and the father and mother that begat me; but its 'effacing finger can never blot out the remembrance of the fearful hour when that once proud spirit, terror stricken, took its awful flight into eternity. I never witness an offer of mercy rejected --

I never think seriously of the future, but it recurs most vividly to my mind.'

"Such is the substance of the physician's narrative. I have related it in my own language, and memory may have failed me in some particulars, but its more important features are given." -- *Christian Advocate and Journal.*

Such is the narrative. It speaks for itself; and, like a thousand events continually occurring in every neighbourhood, and in every Christian congregation, it says -- "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

I shall conclude this address, my dear friends, *by a presentation of a few of those many motives, which urge you to an immediate entrance upon a religious life.*

Religion is your duty. The claim grows out of your relations to God. And what relations! Who can describe them? What tongue or pencil can adequately

portray them? Look back; what were you some few years ago? "Less than worm, or mite, or shadow can express; you were nothing." Now you are -- what? A wondrous being, launched forth upon the shoreless ocean of duration --

"To live when every fire,
Of every sun, shall languish and expire;
Or as before the throne of God you stand,
See new worlds rolling from his mighty hand."

God has given you this "wondrous gift of an immortal mind." He is your CREATOR. Are you under no obligations? do you owe him nothing for this? He is your Benefactor; he daily openeth his hand to supply you with every good thing. The light of his sun shines upon you; his heavens drop fatness all around you. His rains water the fields; his dew distil upon the tender plants; his harvests wave in the summer's breeze; he expands the swelling bud, opens the unfolding flower, and ripens

the delicious fruit. At his table you are fed, from his flocks you are clothed; the forests and the mines are his. No stone in the wall, or beam in the timber, of the habitation that shelters you, but he made it. The air you breathe, the water you drink, belong to him. Your heart beats but at his command; it is he that impels onward, both when you wake and when you sleep, the blood that flows in your veins. Reason and understanding, memory and will, perception and emotion, are his gifts.

"In him you live, and move, and have your being."

He is your Redeemer. For you he gave his Son, -- stupendous gift! He had no greater; he could do no more. God gave his Son, is the most transcendent truth ever uttered in the ears of an astonished universe. We fear to enlarge upon this truth, lest we should belittle it.

"A solemn reverence checks our songs,
And praise sits silent on our tongues."

What then are our obligations! You claim that you can *feel* no obligation; that you know the meaning of the term gratitude -- and you do. If a friend had conferred upon you some signal favour, and that at cost and peril to himself; if he had saved your life at the risk of his own, you could feel; you would detest yourself if you did not feel. The choked utterance, the falling tear, the deep emotion, in such a case, you call manly. Let me illustrate: --

A minister, in crossing the Atlantic, was conversing with the mate of a vessel, on this very topic -- *gratitude*. The sailor's heart responded to the truths presented, and he remarked that it called to mind one of the most thrilling scenes he had ever witnessed.

"I was," said he, "at sea upon the broad Atlantic, as we now are. It was just such a bright moonlight night as this, and

the sea was quite as rough. The captain had turned in, and I was upon watch, -- when suddenly a cry was heard, 'A man overboard!' To go out in a boat was exceedingly dangerous. I could hardly make up my mind to command the hands to expose themselves; so I volunteered to go myself, if two others would accompany me. Two generous fellows came forward, and in a moment the boat was lowered, and we were tossed upon a most frightful sea. As we rose upon a mountain-wave, we discovered the man upon a distant billow. We heard his cry, and responded, Coming! As we descended into the trough of the sea, we lost sight of him, and heard nothing but the roar of the ocean. When we rose on the next wave we saw him, and distantly heard him call. We gave him another word of encouragement, and pulled with all our strength. At the top of each successive wave we saw him, and our hearts were filled with encouragement, -- as often in the

trough of the sea we almost abandoned the hope of success. The time seemed long, and the struggle was such as men never make but for life. We finally reached him, just as he was ready to sink with exhaustion. When we had drawn him into the boat he was helpless and speechless. Our minds now turned towards the ship. She had rounded to; but, exhausted as we were, the distance between us was frightful. One false move would have filled our boat, and consigned us all to a watery grave; yet we reached the vessel, and were drawn upon deck. We were all exhausted; but the rescued man could neither walk nor speak -- yet he was perfectly sensible. He clasped our feet, and began to kiss them. We disengaged ourselves from his embrace. He then crawled after us; and as we stepped back he followed us, looking up at one moment with smiles and tears, -- and then patting our wet footprints with his hand, he kissed them with eager fondness. I never

witnessed such a scene in my life. I suppose if he had been our greatest enemy, he would have been perfectly subdued by our kindness. The man was a passenger. During the whole of the remaining part of the voyage he evinced the deepest gratitude; and when we reached port he loaded us with presents."

You do not know this man, you never saw him, you do not even know his name; but you respect him, you feel a liking for him. You say his conduct became him, *as a man*; and so it did. There was cause for gratitude; but what was his obligation compared with yours? The benefactors of this man did not *make him man*; they did not give him a life to save. They were not his creators. They had not been all his life long loading him with benefits. They did not die for him. Your Benefactor has done all this. He created, he has preserved, and he redeemed. It is manly to forget him -- to neglect him? Is ingratitude becoming? Or

rather, -- does not love so great demand your heart, your life, your all? Is not religion a most reasonable service?

2. *Religion is your interest.*

You have no interest in either world, but what it concentrated in that one word -- *religion*. I know many try to think they have. "I cannot attend to it at present," says one; "I am immured in business." "I am not ready yet." "I have to attend to some pleasures to which I am pledged." "I am about to settle in life, and religion ill befits a season of joy and festivity." "I fear, if I become pious, it will interfere with my business prospects." "I am not in the right situation to become a Christian now, but hope for a change before long." "I am engaged for a winter's round of amusements; and the dance and the song do not well accord with the thoughts of God and eternity." "I shall be obliged to perform duties not agreeable to my taste, if I become pious." Such are some of the

excuses, which, put into words or concealed in the heart, are made the barriers in the way of salvation. Lighter are they than the gossamer; and only less foolish than they are sinful.

My friends, should you see a man sitting under his arbour, reading a poem, -- pleased with the harmonious flow of its numbers, the beauty of its imagery, and its fine strokes of wit; and should you call to him -- "Sir, your house is on fire!" or, "Your child is just climbing over the well;" and should he reply, "Yes, this is a matter of some importance, I will attend to it when I finish this book," would you not say, "He is mad?" Or should you visit a poor wretch, starving and freezing, and in the dead of winter in a mud cottage, open to the drifting snows and the falling sleet, and proffer him a house you had fitted up with every convenience, -- and whose larder and cellar were full, and at his service, -- and receive for answer, "I think you, sir; but I fear if I

accept your offer, I shall lose all my *comforts*, -- would you not say, "He also is mad?" And can he be sane, who excuses himself from safety, happiness, and heaven? Ah, me! the leper who refuses a cure, the blind who refuses sight, or he, consuming slow with eating cancer, who refuses an infallible remedy, is wise, compared with him who excuses himself from accepting salvation.

I said that in that one word, *religion*, was concentrated your every interest. It is only another name for communion with God, the fountain of all good. "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."

"He doth not say," says Beveridge, in commenting on his great name 'I AM,' "I am their light, guide, strength, or tower; but only, I AM. He sets, as it were, his hand to a blank, that his people may write over it what they please that is good for them, -- as though he would say: 'Are they weak? I am

strength. Are they poor? I am riches. Are they in trouble? I am comfort. Are they sick? I am health. Are they dying? I am life. Have they nothing? I am all things. I am wisdom; I am power; I am justice; I am mercy; I am grace; I am goodness; I am glory, beauty, holiness, eminency, supereminency, perfection, all-sufficiency, eternity; JEHOVAH, I AM. Whatsoever is amiable in itself, or desirable to them, that I am. Whatsoever is pure and holy, -- whatsoever is great or pleasant, -- whatsoever is good or needful to make them happy -- *that I AM*.'"

1. I entreat you seriously to weigh this one important fact, -- *youth is the period for decision*. This is the period, generally, in which the die is cast. "What life is to immortality, youth is to life. Life decides for immortality, and youth decides for life; not invariably, but so generally, as that the exceptions prove the rule." From *twelve to twenty-four* the choice is generally

made for life, and for eternity. "This is the flood-tide; and in the whole term of human life there is but one flood-tide. Happy they by whom it is taken, and the bark of the soul borne by it to the haven of safety." This, then, is the period of hope. Facts prove this. Of the vast multitude now pious -- devoting themselves to God and his cause, carrying forward the great work of Christian benevolence, teachers in the Sabbath school, praying men in the house of God, at work in the field of Christian education, presidents and professors in colleges, principals of religious schools, pastors in churches, missionaries abroad, writers of a sanctified literature -- nearly all of these were early converts. Nay more; if the great scroll itself, containing the records of life, could be let down, and opposite each name you could read the time of life at which each denizen of heaven was converted, unquestionably you would find the overwhelming majority were from the

ranks of the young. Youth, then, is a hopeful period, full of promise, rich with opportunities. Seize upon it, dear youth; secure its advantages, lay hold of its promises, and cast abroad the seed for a glorious harvest.

2. *Youth is the period of peculiar convictions and impressions.*

"There are moments when the mind is all thought, and the heart all feeling."

The soul at times, in silence of the night,
Has flashes -- transient intervals of light --
When things to come, without a shade of doubt,
In terrible reality stand fully out.
Those lucid moments suddenly present
Glances of truth, as though the heavens were rent,
And through the chasms of celestial light,
The future breaks upon the startled sight.
Life's vain pursuits and time's advancing pace,
Appear with death-bed clearness, face to face,
And immortality's expanse sublime
In just proportion to the speck of time:
Whilst death, uprising from the silent shade,
Shows his dark outline, ere the vision fade;
In strong relief against the blazing sky,
Appears the shadow, as it passes by:

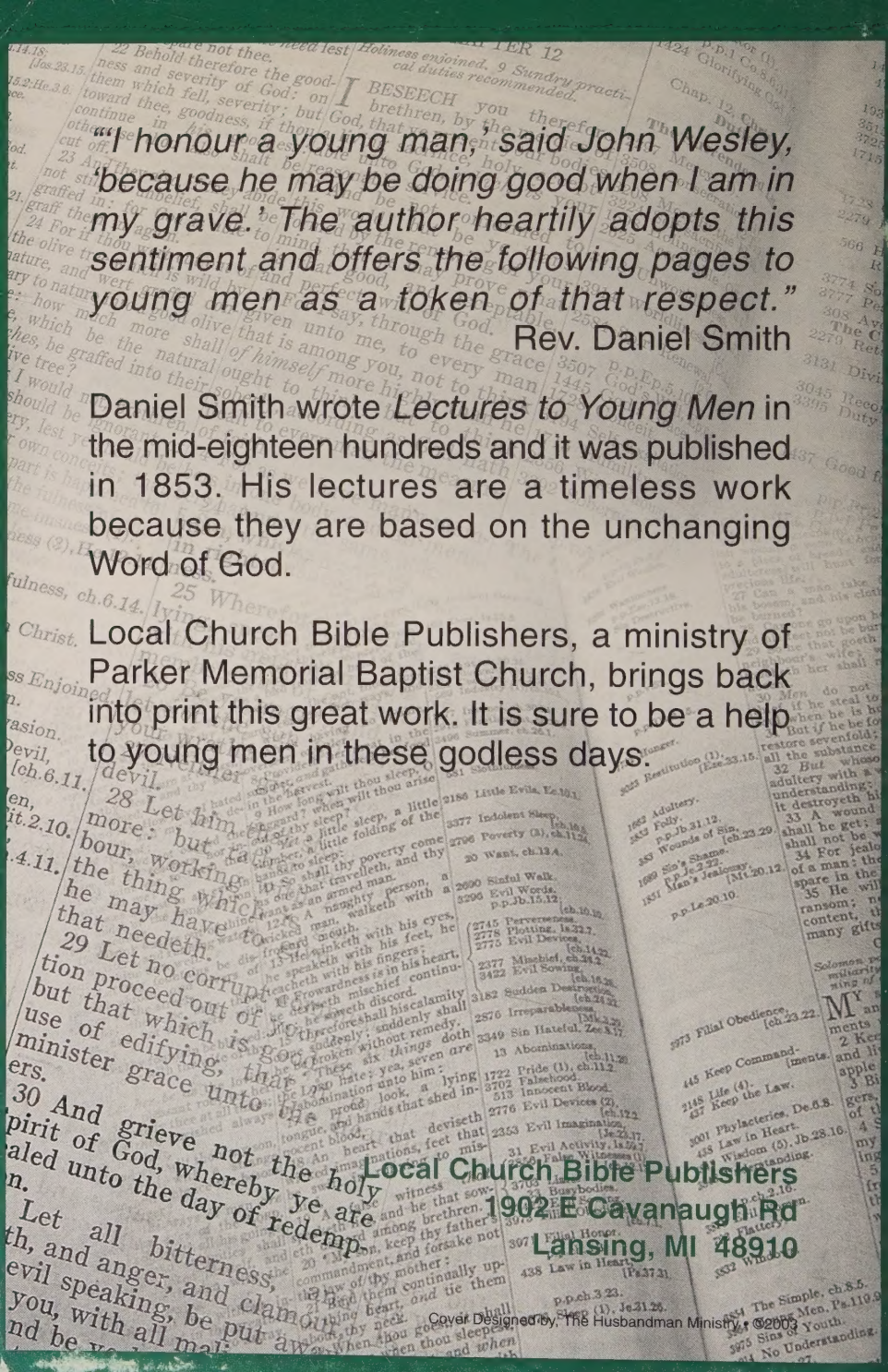
And though o'erwhelming to the dazzled brain,
These are the moments when the mind is sane.

JANE TAYLOR.

You are not strangers to these views and feelings; for they are much more frequent and forcible in youth than at any other period of life. Have you not, by the couch of a dying friend, or when you felt the gentle pressure of a dying mother's hand, and when you saw her tranquil exit, felt the utter emptiness of worldly pleasure? and said, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his?" Have you not, in seasons of revival, when the Spirit was moving upon the assembly, when all was still and solemn, and awe was impressed upon the countenance -- have you not felt the rising sigh, and wiped away the starting tear? O, young man, cherish these convictions, carry them to your closet, pray that they may increase. Feeling is not

conviction, but it greatly aids conviction; and to harden the heart at such a moment, is folly amounting to madness. Rather pray incessantly: show me myself, my heart, its depravity and impurity, its unbelief and stubbornness. Show me my guilt and my peril. Save me from indecision; save me from the fear of man; save me from sinking back again into supineness and indifference. Save, Lord. or I perish!

THE END.



"I honour a young man,' said John Wesley, 'because he may be doing good when I am in my grave.' The author heartily adopts this sentiment and offers the following pages to young men as a token of that respect."
Rev. Daniel Smith

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